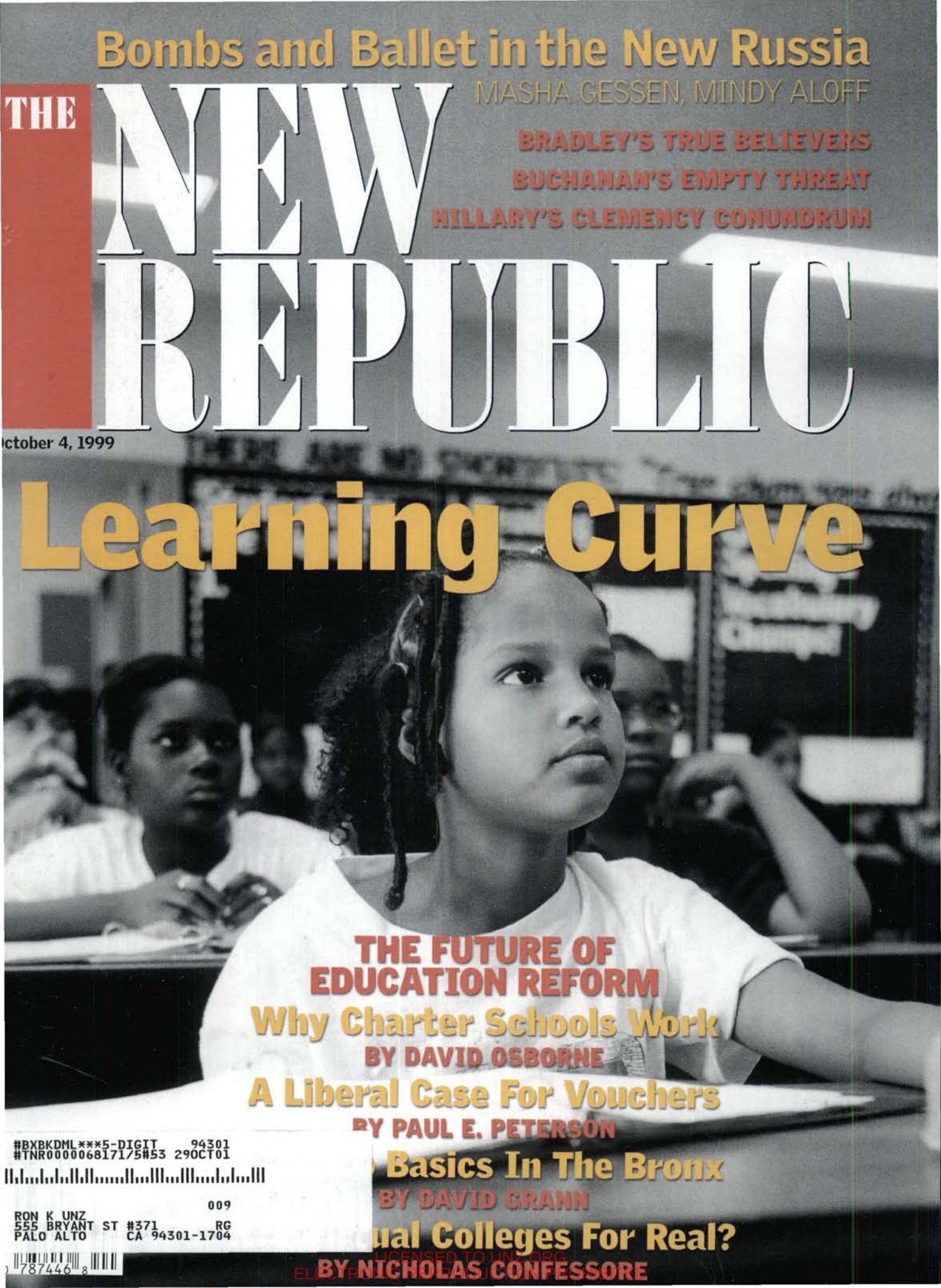
Bombs and Ballet in the New Russia
MASHA GESSEN, MINDY ALOFF

THE NEW REPUBLIC

BRADLEY'S TRUE BELIEVERS
BUCHANAN'S EMPTY THREAT
HILLARY'S CLEMENCY CONUNDRUM

October 4, 1999

Learning Curve



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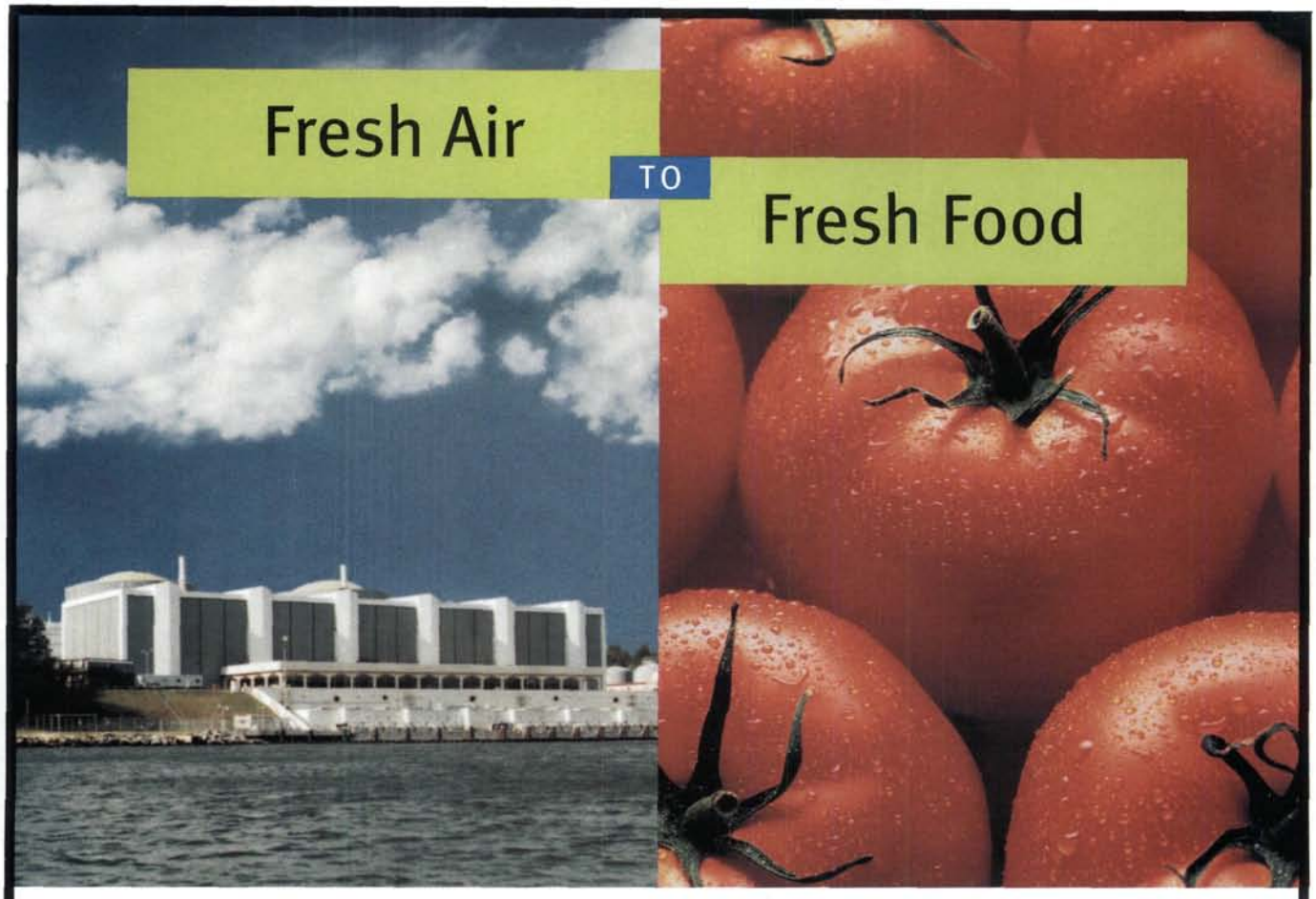

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Politics and the Arts

WASHINGTON, D.C.
OCTOBER 4, 1999
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CORRESPONDENCE

City limits

TO THE EDITORS:

In "Growing the Inner City?" (August 23), Tamar Jacoby and Fred Siegel link President Clinton's "New Markets" initiative—a package of federal tax credits and loan guarantees designed to spur private-sector equity investments in impoverished areas—with recent economic development efforts in Harlem. The authors see both projects as "third way" programs that combine public and private resources in order to fight poverty. Although the efforts in Harlem and the New Markets initiative share little in their design, Jacoby and Siegel point to the former as a lesson for the latter and argue that "as long as government is involved, it will bring inefficiency, bureaucracy, and politics."

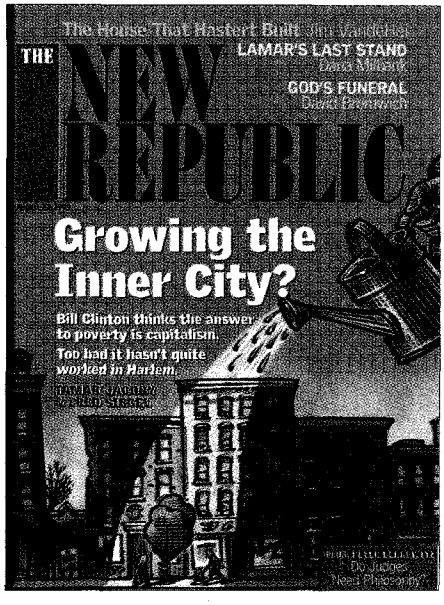
Unfortunately, Jacoby and Siegel's data do not support this assertion. The authors repeatedly admit that the Harlem programs have brought positive economic change to the impoverished area. They also fail to provide any evidence that such development would have occurred without government involvement. In fact, the authors acknowledge that, in places like Harlem, "public-private solutions are needed to grease the way for capitalism."

Jacoby and Siegel further argue that such public-private "hybrid" approaches to poverty alleviation are "clear improvement[s] over Great Society liberalism." What they fail to mention, however, is that such hybrid approaches began with the Great Society and date back to 1966, when New York Senators Robert Kennedy and Jacob Javits introduced legislation to set up the first community development corporations (CDCs). This is the origin of the community development venture capital industry, a highly effective method of economic development on which Clinton modeled part of his New Markets legislation.

JULIA S. RUBIN
Boston, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITORS:

Tamar Jacoby and Fred Siegel warn that a government role in public-private development projects skews private investment decisions. In reality, government tax credits and loan guarantees are necessary to help inner-city neighborhoods overcome factors that have historically placed them at a distinct disadvantage to their suburban neighbors. Harlem, like many other inner-city neighborhoods in the United States, was devastated during the 1950s and 1960s by the loss of many of its middle-class residents and manufacturing jobs to the suburbs. Government policies augmented these trends—Federal Housing Administration mortgages made newly constructed suburban houses more affordable; new highways made suburbs more accessible; and state and local tax incentives helped lure manufacturing plants to suburban sites. The result, as scholars such as William Julius Wilson point out, was that inner-city neighborhoods were left with few available jobs, a scarcity of middle-class residents, a weakened tax base, and decaying services, including public education.


THE NEW REPUBLIC
LAMAR'S LAST STAND
GOD'S FUNERAL
Growing the Inner City?
Bill Clinton thinks the answer to poverty is capitalism. Too bad it hasn't quite worked in Harlem.

Current public-private partnerships are designed to strengthen the local economy, provide new jobs and businesses, and encourage people to move back into inner-city neighborhoods. Government involvement is crucial precisely because these areas lack the requisite amount of social and economic capital from within the community but are not attractive enough on their own to draw outside investors.

The declining crime rate and robust national economy have laid the groundwork for Harlem's reemergence. However, the new public-private investment that Jacoby and Siegel describe is helping to give Harlem residents their best chance in decades at re-integrating their community into the larger regional and national economy.

GREGORY M. STANKIEWICZ
Princeton, New Jersey

Excusing Hillary

TO THE EDITORS:

All the hoopla about Hillary Clinton's "abuse excuse" has overshadowed what I take to be the single most shocking statement the first lady made in her interview in *Talk* magazine ("The Abuse Excuse," August 23). On the subject of the president's decision to bomb Kosovo, she declared, with evident pride: "I urged him to bomb. . . . You cannot let this go on at the end of the century that has seen the major holocaust of our time. What do we have NATO for if not to defend our way of life?"

Perhaps Mrs. Clinton had better review the NATO charter. In its fatuousness and insensitivity to a highly complex issue, this remark is of a piece with the pop psychology and narcissism that pervade the whole interview.

But is the "new" Hillary who reveals herself here really all that new? Your readers might want to take a look at her notorious January 1998 interview with Matt Lauer. It was evident back then that, for Hillary, power is all. "That," she said witheringly about the possibility of her husband's having had sex with Monica Lewinsky, "will not be proved." Notice that she didn't say that it hadn't happened, only that it wouldn't be "proved"—a word that strongly suggests that, despite all her protestations to the contrary, she knew all along it was true. And, if it hadn't been for that little blue dress, Hillary would still be denying that anything had happened. So much for "our way of life."

MARJORIE PERLOFF
Pacific Palisades, California

TO THE EDITORS:

Your editorial against Hillary Clinton was baseless and base. It was baseless because, in the *Talk* magazine interview, she didn't excuse or justify what Bill Clinton did; she termed it a "sin." As she said in the interview, "He's a grownup. . . . He's responsible for his own behavior whether I'm there or 100 miles away." It was base because of its hypocritical, impossible expectations. While noting the "contradictions" in her image, the editorial denied her right to show voters the real woman behind those contradictions. It offered no alternative explanation for Bill's behavior, yet it implied that Hillary's explanation wasn't sincere. It omitted a vital detail: Bill's father died before the mother-grandmother conflict occurred, which made him more developmentally fragile than the average four-year-old.

It was base, too, because of its insensitivity to the pain Hillary has endured. Note her pointed remark, "When you hear stories like that, your own problems seem trivial," concerning a Rwandan victim of genocidal hatred who had to sever her own arm.

MARK B. PETERSON
Charlottesville, Virginia

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TO THE EDITORS:
Hillary Clinton forgives her husband for his deceit. She calls it "a sin of weakness" rather than a "sin of malice." But she's saying that you can do something wrong and be forgiven for it as long as you meant well. Intentions, in the end, are more important than consequences. How do you prove that you meant well? Simply by saying so. Is this something you would teach your child? If not, then why on earth do so many people condone it in a president?

A psychologist once told her, Mrs. Clinton says, that her husband lies and cheats because as a child he was caught between his mother and grandmother. I'm a practicing psychologist, and I have a very different diagnosis. Clinton continues to lie and cheat because people excuse him. In his personal life, his wife continues to make excuses for his wrongful behavior and to forgive him. In the political realm, voters support Clinton in ever-stronger numbers, it seems, with each additional lie. We tell him, in effect, that he can do no wrong. And he believes us.

Making excuses for and forgiving someone who deliberately lies and cheats, again and again? Now that's sickness. The president has psychological problems, to be sure. But his ethical ones are even bigger. And the people who excuse him are the least healthy of all. They need to ask themselves why they settle for a common liar as a president—or a husband.

Hopefully, an enabler and excuser such as Hillary Clinton will never hold public office. If she makes such excuses for her husband, what might she do with criminals? How could she be trusted to avoid corruption herself? Her unhealthiness makes her a dangerous person—even if she does not mean to be.

MICHAEL J. HURD, PH.D.
Chevy Chase, Maryland

Not so black-and-white

TO THE EDITORS:
It is always tempting to oversimplify the political dynamics of a foreign country, as Peter Beinart's disappointing caricature of South African politics does ("New Democrats," July 12). But two glaring facts add shades of gray to Beinart's neat black-and-white snapshot.

First, who is "black"? If "blacks" are defined only as "Africans," then it is true that African nationalist rhetoric attracted these voters more than the bread-and-butter liberalism of the Democratic Party (D.P.) in this year's general election. But, then, how do the "coloureds"—the Afrikaans-speaking mixed-race population—and South Africa's sizeable Indian community fit into Beinart's crude racial

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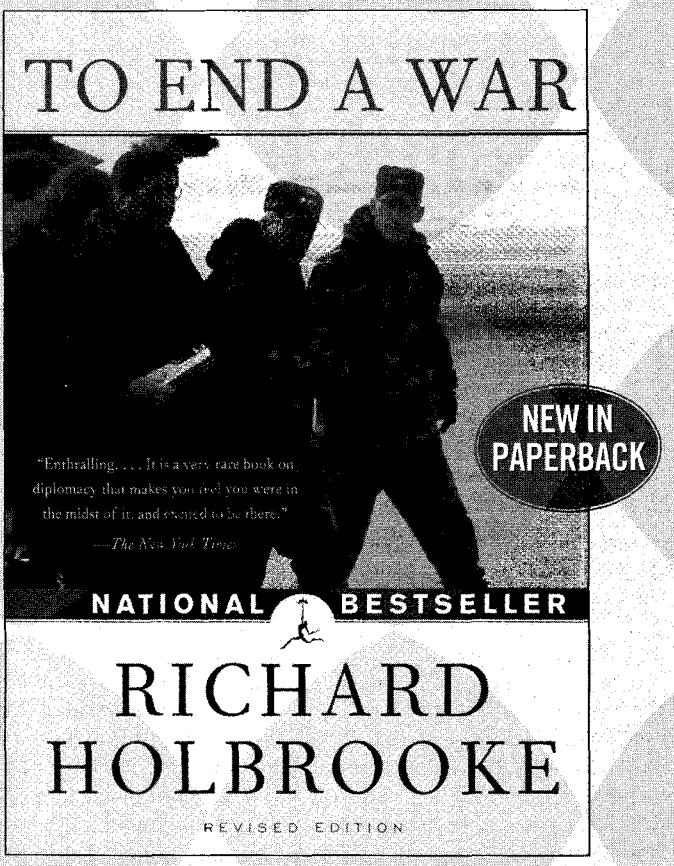
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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Empty Threat

TREMBLE, REPUBLICANS! Patrick Buchanan is threatening to bolt the party and run for president on the Reform Party ticket! And no less an authority than *The New York Times* has decreed that the chief question is "how damaging [this] could be" to presumptive GOP nominee George W. Bush. "It would hurt," one Republican fretted to the *Times*, comparing a possible Buchanan candidacy to the 1992 Ross Perot run that drained votes from George Bush.

Would it? There's actually little evidence that Buchanan ever enjoyed massive support in the Republican party or anywhere else—except, perhaps, in the ranks of his fellow chat-show hosts. In two presidential primary campaigns, Buchanan's popular-vote total, in contests that were either mostly one-on-one or three-way affairs, never exceeded 22.4 percent. Even when he beat Bob Dole in New Hampshire in 1996, he got just 27.3 percent of the vote.

This year, Buchanan's candidacy has notably failed to catch fire. He has registered consistently in the single digits in the polls, and he finished fifth in Iowa, behind Gary Bauer. So one reason the Chevy Chase populist may want to go the Reform route—aside from getting his hands on the third party's $12.6 million in federal matching funds and ventilating his faux-working-class disdain for the Bush clan—is to avoid an early and humiliating defeat.

True, if Buchanan can continue to con the media into buying his man-of-the-people routine, he may ring up some votes as the bane of Goldman Sachs and other NAFTA beneficiaries. But, if people focus on Buchanan's actual ideas, his flameout should be quick and comical. I refer to the candidate's new book, *A Republic, Not An Empire*, whose chief theme is that the American people have repeatedly been dragged into bloody and costly imperial wars by a combination of British perfidy and the bungling of our own conspiratorial internationalist elites. In this category of pointless bloodbaths, Buchanan very much means to include World War II.

This is an old theme for Buchanan, whose memoir, *Right From the Beginning*, tells how he absorbed the tendentious America First ideology as a boy in the tonier precincts of Washington, D.C. The one time I interviewed him, back during the '96 campaign, Buchanan treated me to a disquisition on Franklin D. Roosevelt's "plotting" to get us into the war against Hitler's Germany. But seldom has he articulated it with such abandon—unless you count that unfortunate column he once wrote questioning whether Jews were really gassed at Treblinka.

In Buchanan's view, Great Britain's mistake in the run-up to the war was promising to defend Poland from German invasion. And FDR's unpardonable error was backing the British. Instead, we, the British, and the French should have written Poland off. After all, Hitler himself had said in *Mein Kampf* that he had no designs on the West, and, Buchanan reports, Hitler kindly regarded the United States as "the mistress of the Western Hemisphere." With Poland gone, we should have stood back and let the morally equivalent Hitler and Stalin "tear each other to pieces"—perhaps even prolonging the fight by helping one when the other got too strong. We could have avoided war with Japan, too, if not for Roosevelt's imposition of sanctions on Tokyo for its awful but, to us, inconsequential depredations in China. Pearl Harbor was perfidious, but provoked by FDR.

If only we'd stayed out, as polls showed Depression-era Americans wanted to do! Well, what if? Forget about the Holocaust, since Buchanan obviously couldn't care less, and since he does have a point that FDR did not exactly intend to save the Jews as he shored up Britain. How might the world have looked if we had followed the "patriotic" America First program, an updated version of which Buchanan would enact today? Perhaps Hitler and Stalin would have fought each other to a mutually exhausting standoff, leaving the United States, Britain, and France safe. Or maybe Stalin would have won, acquiring a vast and resource-rich empire with which to fuel a global Communist revolution that would someday have arrived at America's shores. Then again, Hitler might have won, acquiring the power to do more or less the same—giving us a chance to find out what sort of mistress he really wanted us to be.

Or maybe Berlin and Moscow would have reached a negotiated settlement, leaving both battered but intact, in possession of vast swatches of Central Europe, and free to resume mischief later on, more or less permanently—just as Iran and Iraq were after their war. And how much different would such a division of Eastern Europe have been from FDR's sell-out at Yalta, against which Buchanan elsewhere fulminates? Meanwhile, Imperial Japan would have ruled up to the shores of Hawaii. Can Buchanan seriously believe Americans would have been secure, let alone free, on such a planet?

Of course, Buchanan's view of history is riddled with contradictions, chief among them being that he believes resistance to communism justified extended American postwar military involvement in Europe, even as he argues that there was nothing to choose between Hitler and Stalin—and that U.S. foreign policy should be dictated by amoral national interest. Buchanan's discussion of the cold war is a hasty muddle, but he seems to think the twilight struggle was OK because, in contrast to the bitter pre-Pearl Harbor debate, America was "unified" against communism after World War II. In his view, NATO should have been temporary; U.S. troops could have left Europe in 1961, by which time the Western Europeans were strong enough to face Russia alone. Tell it to West Berlin.

Buchanan's crazy view of history is, of course, tied to his crazy view of today. In today's expanded NATO and U.S. troop presence in Asia, he sees a replay of the ill-advised British "war guarantee" to protect Poland against Hitler. It never occurs to him that sometimes a credible threat to fight is necessary to prevent war. Buchanan never mentions Dean Acheson's notorious declaration placing Korea outside America's "defense perimeter"—which was quickly followed by a North Korean attack.

The cost of intervention in Kosovo and Bosnia has so far been relatively minimal in U.S. lives, Buchanan's loud predictions to the contrary notwithstanding. The pompous bellicosity of his rhetoric masks a basically pusillanimous view of America's capabilities; when it comes to our role in the world, Pitchfork Pat becomes Nervous Nellie. The energy he would save abroad, one imagines, would be redirected toward the domestic "culture war" he called for at the 1992 Republican convention. In this regard, his book's arch passage about the way ethnic minorities lobby for costly U.S. interventions is of particular interest.

If the Reform Party nominates the former "Crossfire" host, then we can all be treated to a government-funded seminar featuring more of this ugly crankery. And the Reformers will learn the same lesson Republicans should have absorbed from their own failed efforts to appease Buchanan. Buchanan for President is, and always has been, a sectarian vanity project dressed up as a principled crusade. As Marion Barry once said when informed that Jesse Jackson was considering running against him for mayor of Washington: "He don't wanna run nothing but his mouth."

CHARLES LANE

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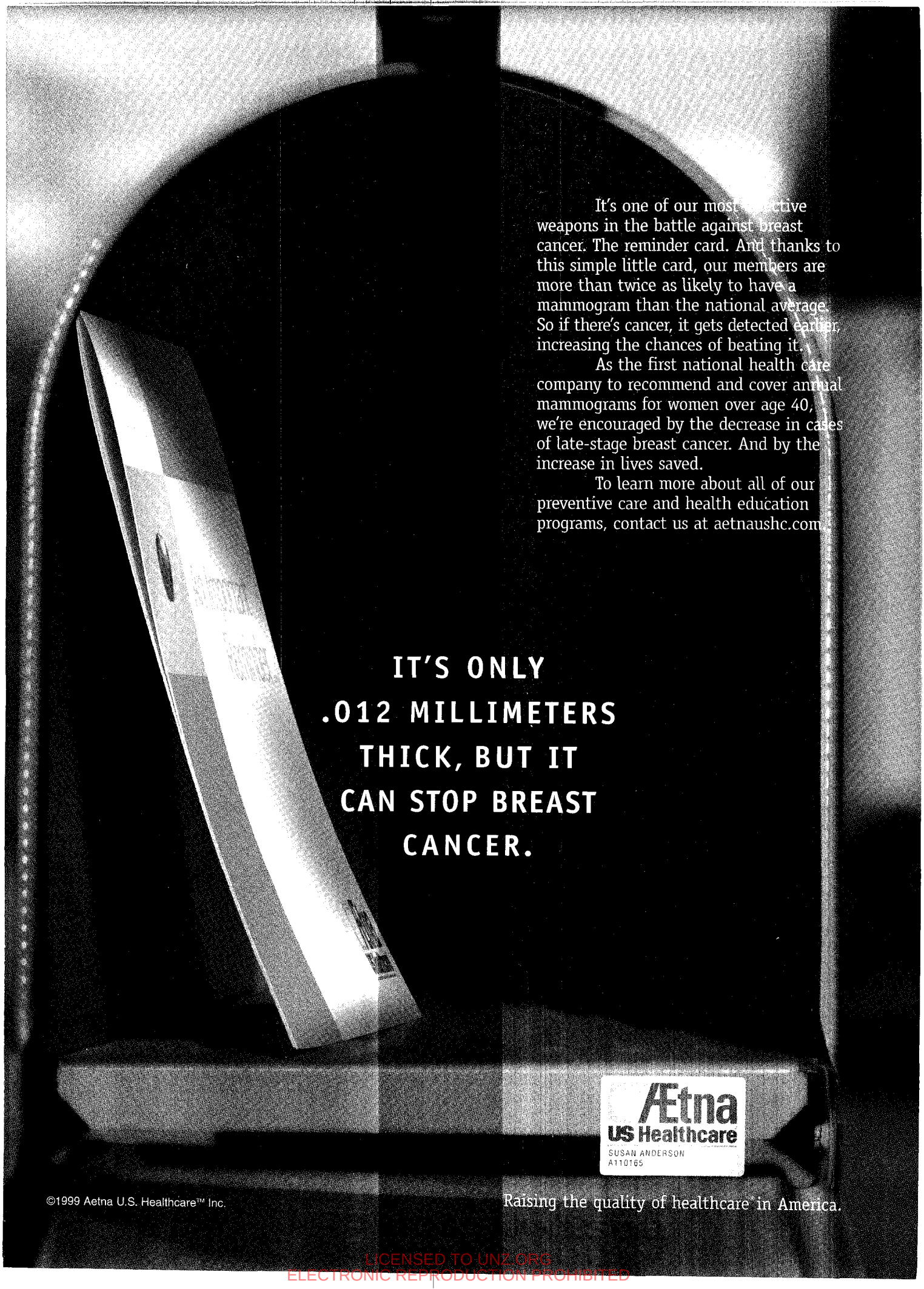
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CAMPAIGN JOURNAL

Bill's Believers

CRYSTAL CITY, MISSOURI

TO MY JADED eye, the kickoff of Bill Bradley's presidential campaign was strictly amateur. A singer botched the words to the national anthem ("through the perilous flight"). The American flag got tangled as it was hoisted up a rusty pole. The sound system crackled and squealed with feedback. When Bradley spoke, he was too tall for the microphone, which caused those toward the back of the crowd to shout that they couldn't hear. On his closing line, Bradley stumbled; instead of "Come with me—let us walk toward that dream together," he declared, like a foreign student of English: "Let us come with me."

But Anita Dunn, Bradley's communications director, was so swept away by the moment that she didn't even seem to notice. "It's so beautiful," she gushed as Bradley reached his finale. "I love this part," she said, getting all *farklempt*. I offered her my bow tie to dab her moist eyes. Absurd though it seemed to weep at a presidential announcement speech, I had no doubt Dunn's tears were real. They were another sign of a phenomenon I'd observed over the past few months: the passion of the Bradley people. While the Gore staff is a collection of cool professionals, the Bradley staffers are on a mission from God.

Part of this is a natural expression of the challenger mentality. The contrast between the energetic Forbes campaign and the play-it-safe Bush campaign is much the same. Both the Forbes and the Bradley campaigns have little to lose and a greater sense of mission than their competitors. The front-runners' aides, by contrast, tend to see their campaign work as a meal ticket (a newly hired Bush aide told me he was "going to the show"), and the campaigns take on a mercenary aspect. Gore, for example, is hampered by advisers (six pollsters and counting) who still work for other clients, both political and commercial.

The Bradley and Forbes campaigns are similar in another way: Both are stocked with true believers who see themselves as part of a cause, not a campaign. "He's the ideological heir to the legacy that started with Barry Goldwater," says Forbes pollster John McLaughlin, whose firm only takes on conservative causes. "I like Steve Forbes, but the most important thing is we share conservative principles."

That sounds much like the sentiments of Doug Berman, Bradley's campaign chairman and a longtime crusader for campaign finance reform. "This is not about Bradley," he says. "Bradley's the derivative." If Forbes's staff seeks to revive conservatism, the Bradley staffers want to salvage liberalism. They call themselves "progressives" these days, but it doesn't matter. "There's been no change in my ideology," says Bradley campaign manager Gina Glantz.

Here's where Gore is at a natural disadvantage. He's running a campaign as a centrist, and there just aren't many raging moderates out there. Though many of his staffers are passionate about their beliefs, they don't have a unifying cause. In 1992, Clinton's team, though not a gang of liberal purists, had a cause: saving the Democratic Party. Forbes's cause is conservatism. Bradley's cause is liberalism. Gore's and Bush's cause, it seems to some people, is getting elected.

Regardless of whether you agree with their ideas (and often I don't), it's hard not to admire the fervor of Bradley's troops. Diane Feldman, Bradley's pollster, states her priorities proudly: more spending on schools, universal health care, and less spending on weapons. Will Robinson, Bradley's media consultant, sees the candidate as a vehicle for progressive issues that haven't been top priorities for Clinton. "The wing of the party I'm in has been ignored," he says. "Bradley reached out to me."

For each of the themes Bradley has championed—campaign finance reform, abortion rights, gun control, child poverty—there's a Bradley aide for whom that issue is a lifelong cause. Berman, who grew up in Usonia, Frank Lloyd Wright's cooperative community in Pleasantville, New York, thinks campaign finance reform is a way to reduce income inequality. Glantz, whose "ideology-based" consulting firm has represented abortion rights groups, says, "I have a personal passion for the issue." Eric Hauser, Bradley's goatee- and earring-sporting press secretary, started a p.r. firm that handles only "progressive causes" such as the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence. His pet issue: gun control. Dunn says she got a "very strong social conscience" from her mother, a Mississippi social worker who ran a refugee program and a food bank. Her top causes are race and poverty.

"I came to D.C. a very liberal person to change the world," says Hauser. Among Bradley's campaign staffers, several of whom have been with the senator a decade or more, Hauser has found kindred spirits. "We're all very passionate progressives," he says. Not a centrist New Democrat in the lot. And Bradley's most loyal supporters are much the same. The cars at his rallies are plastered with stickers supporting gay rights or unions and printed with battle cries such as "Against abortion? Then don't have one" and "Friends don't let friends vote Republican."

This may explain why Bradley, so far, has emphasized his liberal views and played down his more moderate ones. As a senator, Bradley, after all, was as much a centrist as Gore. But he realizes that the unreconstructed liberals are the Democratic Party's most energetic members, much as the right-wingers are for the Republicans. Bradley's voice for liberal policies has given him a standing that virtually nobody (myself included) thought possible. This may have less to do with Bradley himself than with revulsion for Bill Clinton. But, whatever the reason, Bradley is now a contender. Two polls in New Hampshire, *The Boston Globe*'s and CNN's, put Bradley in a statistical dead heat with Gore. A Zogby poll in New York showed Bradley down only six points.

Of course, Gore's lead is still formidable elsewhere (a Public Policy Institute of California poll showed him leading Bradley by anywhere from 12 percent to 50 percent). Bradley aides admit that an upset is still unlikely, though they argue that beating Gore would give Bradley the momentum to topple Bush. However, Bradley, if he prevails, will do so by moving the party left, allowing the GOP to become the majority party by speaking for the middle. Just as Bush and the Republicans have begun to understand the lesson of Clinton's shift to the center in 1992 (underscored by Pat Buchanan's recent talk of leaving the party), the Democrats seem to have forgotten it. The RNC is already sending out a barrage of press releases about Bradley's liberal stances on welfare, school vouchers, and Al Sharpton. "He's running to the left to get a benefit in the Democratic primary, but he's going to pay a price for that if he gets to the general election," says the RNC's Cliff May.

In that case, the best moderates can hope for is that Bradley tacks aggressively back to the center and drops the Dukakis platform. But how? If he forsakes the passions of his staff and abandons their causes, he will lose the energy of the true believers who made him a contender in the first place.

DANA MILBANK

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Some members of Congress persist in advocating a "Washington Knows Best" scheme when it comes to retail electricity rate restructuring. These members of Congress *still* don't trust the States to do what they are already doing so well—bringing competition and choice to electric consumers.

A draft proposal circulated by Congressman Joe Barton has traded in the draconian "date certain" mandate for scores of new and equally intrusive federal preemptions of the States. Here's just one example: the Barton draft PREEMPTS NUMEROUS STATE CONSUMER PROTECTIONS if they do not heel consistently to federal standards. The Barton preemption triggers even if the State protections are more rigorous than the prospective federal standards. This is "Washington Knows Best" condescension to the States... at its worst!

This is also very troubling news for the States who have already deregulated—and must now rewrite their laws at the insistence of the federal government or see their state-based reforms litigated in the federal courts. It is even more punitive for States who are still developing restructuring plans and who will likely find the new heavy-handed federal policy prescriptions repugnant.

Congress, just say "**no**" to *any* federal preemptions or heavy-handed federal mandates. When it comes to retail electricity rate restructuring, Washington does *not* know best.

EUSA
Electric Utility Shareholders Alliance
P.O. Box 104595
Jefferson City, MO 65110-4595

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Legislation, mergers, and the Internet have many companies scrambling to look for new lines of business. Except one.

There is an enormous amount of tumult and change in the financial services industry. Legislation is likely to enable banks, insurance companies, and Wall Street brokerages to enter each other's businesses. Mergers are creating financial giants. And the Internet is, of course, changing the world.

It's likely that there will be more change in the financial world in the next few years than there has been over the last 50. But no matter what happens, one thing you can count on is that Fannie Mae is going to be *right where it is*, at the center of the mortgage finance industry.

We will keep finding ways to lower the cost, so that more working families can afford to live their dream of homeownership. So while all this turmoil whips through the financial world, you won't have to worry about there being a reliable source of affordable mortgage funds.

Because we have one job at Fannie Mae. One mission. One purpose. To do whatever we can to lower the cost of homeownership.

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Lessons Learned

THE LAST TIME education was a major political issue, in the 1980s, the chief worry was that U.S. schools were not preparing students to compete in a global, knowledge-based economy. This was the decade when the Reagan administration published "A Nation at Risk," and there was much hand-wringing over tests that showed Americans lagging behind foreigners in basic skills. Of course, history offered a somewhat different verdict. In the last decade, the productivity of the American worker has improved dramatically, with information technology firms driving an unprecedented period of economic growth. The knowledge economy did not leave America behind, as doomsayers had predicted. And so the schools turned out not to be the complete failures many had thought them to be. At least some people were learning the skills they needed to compete in the world economy.

But it was still some people—not all people. And that is why the education debate has returned with a new focus. Although the words "education crisis" still serve as convenient political shorthand for candidates and reporters, the discussion over public schools this year has focused increasingly on improving "failing" schools, which means, more often than not, improving the schools that serve low-income and predominantly minority communities.

That concern for these schools and the students they serve should be so prominent on the national agenda is, itself, a welcome development. That even those politicians who call themselves conservatives should devote so much energy and rhetoric to it is remarkable. Now the debate has begun, though, and liberals and conservatives have begun to bicker over the best ways to help these needy schools. We feel that several proposed reforms are particularly promising.

One sensible reform to bring underachieving schools up to par, which enjoys support among both liberals and conservatives, is opening school systems to greater competition. For generations, education policy focused not on students but on schools; as such, it often seemed that the primary objective of education administrators and their allies in government was the preservation of the public school system status quo, even when it was quite clearly not working. But that started to change a decade ago, as tough-minded reformers such as Albert Shanker, the late president of the American Federation of Teachers, endorsed the idea of allowing publicly financed but independently chartered schools to compete for students within the public school system. Public school stalwarts resisted, but the voter pressure was overwhelming. The results, as David Osborne chronicles in "Healthy Competition" (page 31), have been strongly encouraging. Not only have these charter schools performed well on an individual basis, but there is now considerable evidence that, when allowed to compete fairly, charter schools can, by their mere presence, prod otherwise-complacent school districts into improving.

Another potential way to improve educational opportunities for needy students would be to provide them with vouchers that they could use to attend private schools. Whereas the universal introduction of vouchers could go too far—shoveling tax money into dubious private institutions and perhaps even fatally undercutting America's public education system—it's becoming increasingly difficult for liberals to deny that vouchers may be appropriate in the most critically needy and dysfunctional school districts. As Paul E. Peterson writes in "A Liberal Case for Vouchers" (page 29), one of the standard arguments against vouchers—namely, that they'll make public schools worse by skimming off the best students—simply hasn't been the case in one low-income area where vouchers have been introduced. Dogmatic opponents of vouchers need to reflect upon the anger and fear that swept Cleveland's poor and working-class areas when, on the eve of this year's first day of school, a federal judge suspended—on lofty church-state grounds—the city's voucher program, which allowed 4,000 children to escape some of the worst public schools and instead attend private or parochial schools. As one parent of a voucher student lamented to *The New York Times*, a few days before the judge temporarily changed his decision and allowed children already in the program to continue using the vouchers for at least the first semester of the school year, "My son needs this."

What's also desperately needed in inner-city schools is solid classroom instruction. Indeed, for all the talk of charter schools and vouchers, there's no educational reform as meaningful and effective as the creation of schools that push students to learn more. As David Grann shows in his profile of one extraordinary inner-city public school ("Back to Basics in the Bronx," page 24), providing students with a sober and disciplined academic environment is perhaps the most important reform of all—and one that more than a few suburban schools could benefit from, as well. ■

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NOTEBOOK

CHECK AND MATE: The latest contest of nerves has come to a conclusion on the Korean peninsula, and, once again, North Korea has stared down the Clinton administration. For a year, North Korea has been menacing Asia with the prospect of launching another ballistic missile capable of carrying nuclear weapons. And, for just as long, the United States has been wringing its hands about what to do, shrinking from the obvious conclusion that its policy of appeasement toward North Korea has been an expensive failure and should be replaced by a policy of deterrence. Now comes the news that North Korea has issued a vague verbal promise that it will suspend the launch, and the Clinton administration has announced that it will begin lifting economic sanctions that have been in place against the country's Stalinist regime since the Korean War. This response was so predictable we were almost tempted to conclude that North Korea precipitated the whole thing just to cash in at the right moment. Who knows? Maybe even the missiles it placed where U.S. spy satellites could see them were dummies. The U.S. climbdown was also shaped by former Secretary of Defense William Perry's recent review of policy toward North Korea, which is still secret but apparently concludes that the policy has failed thus far because the United States needs to be even nicer to North Korea. And the policy was born of fear, which we know because one unnamed administration official said as much to *The New York Times*: "What we feared was a new crisis in Korea at the exact moment that there's heightened tension between China and Taiwan and the insertion of peacekeeping troops in Indonesia. That would have been an ugly combination, and we ducked it." Translation: We were willing to pay North Korea to get off our backs even if we know it might well be temporary. The message to the tyrants in Pyongyang could not be clearer: Not only will they be rewarded by the United States for manufacturing weapons of mass destruction, but they can also reap benefits just by doing their bit to add to whatever trouble may be going on in Asia at any particular moment. Because the more trouble there is in the region, the less willing this busy, busy administration will be to confront any of it at the roots. Maybe the Indonesian military should send the North Koreans an invoice for the political service it rendered Pyongyang by sacking East Timor.

WACKO ABOUT WACO: Poor Stephen Jones. The publicity-hungry Oklahoma lawyer must have thought he'd gotten his big break when, in 1995, a federal judge appointed him to represent Timothy McVeigh in the Oklahoma City bombing case. But, during McVeigh's trial, which wasn't televised, Jones failed to make much of an impression on the public, and, when the trial ended in June 1997 and McVeigh was found guilty and sentenced to death, Jones more or less disappeared. Court TV didn't offer him a talk show; Larry King didn't seek him out as a commentator on legal issues of the day; and, in 1998, when Jones published his account of the trial, *Others Unknown*, the book didn't even rate a review in *The New York Times*. But now, in the wake of the recent revelations about the FBI's role at Waco, Jones has thrust himself into the spotlight he so obviously craves. He has been making the TV talk-show rounds peddling the theory that, if the government had come clean from the get-go about its role in the Waco debacle, the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City would never have been bombed and the lives of 168 people would have been saved. Appearing on CNN's "Crossfire" on September 9, Jones maintained that "anytime the government covers up its own questionable deeds, it lays the seed for vigilantism." A few days later, appearing on CNBC's "Hardball," Jones upped the rhetoric, accusing the government of "burn[ing] down a religious community and kill[ing] 85 people." When another guest, a federal prosecutor who helped convict McVeigh, pointed out that there was no proof that the FBI had intentionally or even unintentionally burned down the Waco compound, Jones—who, in his various media appearances, has taken pains to say that he's not trying to justify the Oklahoma City bombing, merely to explain it—shot back: "Well, that's because we don't have all of the evidence . . . because your Department of Justice and your FBI has been keeping it. . . ." Aside from being odious on its own terms, Jones's theory logically inculpates his own former client—Jones's protestations that he's not necessarily admitting McVeigh's guilt notwithstanding. In 1995, when he was appointed to serve as McVeigh's attorney, Jones won plaudits for his willingness to take on a highly unpopular defendant after a number of other lawyers had refused to do so. As Jones said at the time, "I will do my duty." But Jones's duty ended when McVeigh was found guilty and fired Jones. What, we wonder, is Jones's "duty" now?

EXPLORING THE LIMITS OF PUBLIC FUNDING: As NASA slowly begins to launch the multibillion-dollar space station, voters may ask whether the government should even be attempting space exploration at this point, rather than leaving the field to private expense and risk. Relevant to this question is a new study by Jonathan Karpoff, a professor at the University of Washington. Karpoff analyzed the 91 Arctic expeditions of 1818 to 1909, the "Heroic Age" of attempts to locate the North Pole and the Northwest Passage. Arctic exploration in that era was both publicly and privately supported and can be considered analogous to today's space race. Karpoff found that government-funded Arctic expeditions were much more likely to cause deaths or lose ships than private expeditions, even when adjusting for such factors as difficulty of the objective. "Most major Arctic discoveries were made by private expeditions," he concluded, while "most tragedies were publicly funded." One example was the Franklin expedition, whose two ships and 129 men, sponsored by the British government, sailed past Baffin Bay in 1845 and were never heard from again. The highest death toll on a private Arctic expedition was 20 men. Karpoff found that government-run Arctic exploration was less successful because decision-making was muddled and leaders of public efforts "adapted slowly to new information." Something to think about as the extremely muddled space-station project proceeds. ■

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Westchester Dispatch

There Goes the Neighborhood

By STANLEY BING

CHAPPAQUA, NEW YORK
December 2001

I'VE BEEN A Republican my whole life, so I don't guess you could say I'm particularly surprised by the way things worked out after the President and the Senator moved in around here. But I had no idea how bad it would get. They got here sometime in January, as you know, right after the President left his old job and the Senator got her new one. I suppose you could say the trouble started immediately. Right away, there was this business with the President going out every night around 1 a.m. in his pajama bottoms and howling at the moon. That's right. We didn't believe it at first, either, but there he was, a 16-ounce tall boy of Colt 45 in his fist, standing there in the moonlight and making a noise like a fire engine. It took us a while to let him know we don't do things like that around here. We don't even howl indoors, except maybe Larry McCallister that one time when his Internet investments went through the roof.

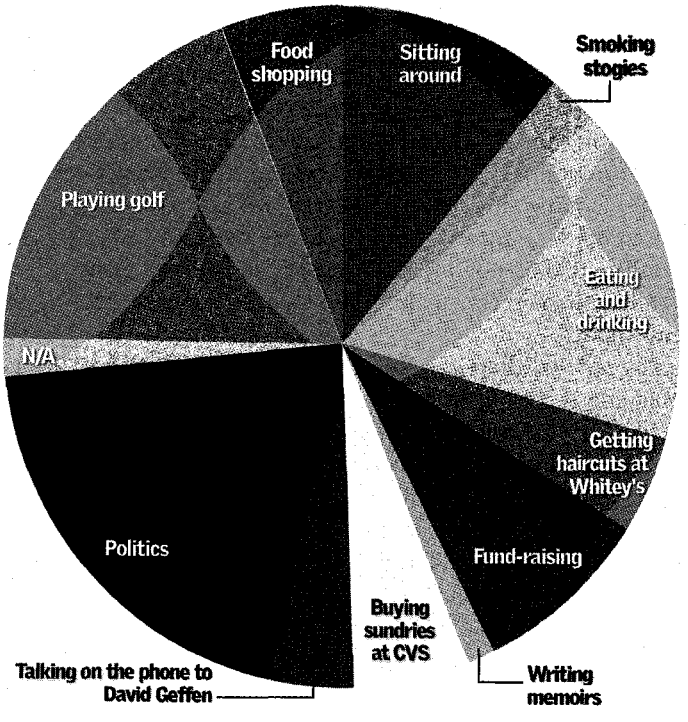
Not long after that, we were shocked to see the President wandering around town all by himself in the middle of the day with a large dog of some sort and a shotgun on his shoulder. "Shooting squirrels for dinner," he said. Then he spat out his cigar butt right there on the street! Can you imagine? When Claire Dinsmore just mentioned to him, quite nicely, that we brake for all animals around here, eat only meat that has been shrink-wrapped by professionals, and do not spit at all, ever, the President apparently made some kind of rude noise and actually goosed the poor woman! Put his hand right on her bottom and squeezed, hard. Or so Claire says, and we have no reason to doubt her. Practically gave her a heart attack, given her advanced age and all.

That was only the beginning, of course. The President wangled himself an invitation to play golf at the local country club, which surprised me, rather, since they're pretty careful about who they let in there, even for a couple of minutes just to turn around their car in the driveway or something. Well, the turmoil that resulted! First, he insisted on driving the cart all around the course, at odd angles to the fairway, tooting a little horn and zooming in on serious players mid-putt, particularly the ladies. Once he got started playing, he refused to score himself honestly or to play quickly and seriously enough to suit *The New York Times*. When his ball went into the water, he actually waded in up to his waist and made a disgraceful spectacle of himself, flopping around and yelling, "Look at me! I'm swimmin'!" until Mr. Peavy, the club's vice president of operations, burst into tears and demanded that he remove himself from the course. The President repaired to the club restaurant, where he made very audible fun of the tuna-stuffed avocado, opting to munch instead on several Slim Jims he had secreted in his pocket, contrary to club rules.

Sometime later that spring, either late April or early May—certainly not fireplace weather, as far as we are concerned—somebody in the neighborhood, I think it was Mattie Finster, the chairwoman of our neighborhood watch, noticed smoke coming out of the top of the Clintons' house. So, anyhow, we called the fire department, because we were all concerned they were up to an indoor barbecue or something like that, you know, and pretty soon Barney Gaston and the boys from the volunteer team were over there spraying the place just to make sure that nobody was hurt and nothing was damaged, and the President came out in some of the ugliest boxer shorts you ever saw and started yelling at people! Boy, does that guy have a temper! Well, I guess we all know about that.

I don't mean to imply that Mr. Clinton is the sole cause for alarm here. The Senator is just as bad, perhaps because she is more clandestine. Obviously, we were all quite amazed at the news that secret Wiccan covens, masquerading as Democratic focus groups, were meeting late at night in her living

What Bill Clinton Will Be Doing in Chappaqua



STANLEY BING

STANLEY BING is a columnist for *Fortune* magazine. His new book, *What Would Machiavelli Do?*, will be published by HarperCollins in December. He is not really a Republican.

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room. All the while, the President was running around town gorging on bar nuts and Nathan's hot dog nuggets and otherwise raising a ruckus with Edgar Brudnoy and his brother Barry. But such was the case, according to several people who had been assigned to watch the house and heard suspicious humming going on in there.

Not only that. Over the summer, the Clintons' gardener, Mickey Butz, a relatively young if somewhat overweight man, was found dead in his bungalow near the Metro North station. Circumstances were extremely suspicious all the way around, but the morning before, Arlene Dubrow, proprietor of the Merry Music Box in the town center, saw the Senator deep in conversation over a lone hydrangea with Mr. Butz, after which he went home and was never seen alive again. Even stranger was the fact that not one piece of correspondence was found in Butz's quarters, even though he was known to have graduated from the eighth grade with honors.

At that point, we felt it was time to call in some professional help, so Mayor Fothergill authorized the hiring of George Stephanopoulos to investigate the entire situation and make a report to town authorities. It was at that point, of course, that the problems we were having were suddenly and inexplicably leaked to the media. At first, we were annoyed, but now I don't think there's one person around here who doesn't think Sam and Cokie are every bit as nice in real life as they appear to be on television.

You'd think all the media attention would have stopped the President, but then you'd have to think again. Instead, he appeared to be getting more cantankerous, for some reason, and started placing obnoxious crank phone calls to members of the DAR and otherwise making his ultraliberal agenda clear to anyone who cared to listen. On Halloween, we are absolutely certain it was Mr. Clinton who left a suspicious, flaming bag on Mr. Peavy's front stoop.

We were clearly losing the battle. Things hit rock bottom as it got on toward the festive Christmas season, with carolers crisscrossing the town. That's when Mrs. Elson came up pregnant, even though her husband Mack had been in Tokyo with IBM for eleven months, and the President was walking around looking like the cat that ate the canary. Then Girl Scout Troop Number 43 vanished and reappeared several hours later looking all mussed up. I don't think anybody will ever be completely sure what happened, except I can certainly tell you that nobody believes the President's story about the Serbian fencing team. It's so easy to blame the Serbians nowadays.

Thank goodness there are still some Americans willing to take the side of the little people, men with time on their hands, like Mr. Giuliani and Mr. D'Amato, who have stood up bravely to work with our town council to begin local proceedings against our unruly neighbors. It won't be easy. The liberal media and maybe even the darn Chappaqua town charter could be against us. But there are a lot of us right-thinking people around here who believe in this thing, and we're not going to let a lot of jerks get in our way.

If you're interested in supporting the cause, call your local Republican congressman. He's been there before and will certainly know what to do. ■

Why America is sick of media mergers.

Monopoly Game

By MARK CRISPIN MILLER
and ROBERT W. MCCHESNEY

AT FIRST, THE coverage of the Viacom-CBS merger followed the usual pattern: front-page stories and top-of-the-hour reports celebrating the deal. This, we were informed, was a marriage made in corporate heaven. Here were two gigantic media corporations, both already making money, about to merge into an even more gigantic media corporation. And, since each partner had so much to give the other (CBS's peerless TV station group and radio empire; Viacom's choice cable channels, movie studio, and theme parks), the union would be sure to make a lot more money.

The celebratory mood, however, did not last long. Unlike the general and extended jubilation following the Disney-Cap Cities merger in 1996 or Bertelsmann's 1998 purchase of Random House, this first flush of enthusiasm quickly gave way to a cooler mood among many journalists. What became clear, as the coverage of the merger grew more critical, was that this "marriage" united two companies that represent what is worst about the U.S. media during these premillennial times. Viacom uses its semi-monopolistic properties to subject our nation's children to commercial carpet-bombing (e.g. MTV, Nickelodeon) and to reduce all art and journalism to mere salesmanship. For its part, CBS uses its dominance of radio in all the major markets to convert what ought to be the most creative—and most local—of our electronic media into what seems like one nonstop, transcontinental infomercial. In combination, the new Viacom will be splendidly situated to provide Madison Avenue with customized programming for and unrivaled access to "consumers," a.k.a. the people.

The main reason for the shift in journalistic tone may be the simple fact that more and more reporters have themselves been dealing with the consequences of such runaway conglomeration (as, in different ways, have TV and radio producers; writers and editors; graphic designers and photographers; and directors, actors, filmmakers, and musicians). Indeed, concurrent with the wave of media consolidation in the '90s has been another stunning trend: the thoroughgoing demoralization of our nation's journalists.

MARK CRISPIN MILLER is a professor of media studies at New York University, where he directs the Project on Media Ownership. ROBERT W. MCCHESNEY is the author of a newly released book, *Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times* (University of Illinois Press).

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It is time to admit the War on Drugs has failed.

Law enforcement has done its job well — with record seizures, arrests and incarceration. Despite this success, drugs are more available, less expensive and more potent. Law enforcement cannot solve the public health problem of drug abuse.

It is time for an effective strategy that will:

- **Provide sufficient funding for after school programs and activity programs to meet the needs of America's youth.**
- **Provide sufficient funding to make treatment on request a reality within the next three years. Treatment is the most cost-effective way of reducing drug abuse.**
- **Provide sufficient funding to stem the health emergencies of HIV/ AIDS and Hepatitis C. These epidemics threaten not only drug users but all Americans.**
- **Evaluate current drug enforcement spending to ensure it is effective and provide sufficient funding for alternatives to incarceration for non-violent, low-level drug offenders.**
- **Examine the racially disproportionate impact of current drug policy as well as its adverse effects on women, especially poor women and their families.**
- **Hold international and domestic drug law enforcement funding at current levels until they prove their effectiveness. Law enforcement has had massive funding increases over the last two decades without any proof of success.**
- **Undertake an examination of current drug polices to access its impact and develop alternatives where necessary.**

Funding must be shifted away from interdiction and incarceration - towards treatment and prevention.

For a complete copy of the recommendations of the National Coalition for Effective Drug Policies contact us at: 703-354-9050 or info@csdp.org

Organizations Concerned with Impact of Drug Policy: Advocates for Youth * Afrikan American Institute for Policy Studies and Planning * AIDS Policy Center for Children, Youth and Families * American Civil Liberties Union * American College of Nurse Midwives * American Medical Student Association * American Medical Women's Association * American Psychological Association * Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs * Association of Reproductive Health Professionals * Association of Schools of Public Health * A Better Bronx for Youth Consortium * Campaign for Effective Crime Policy * Center for Women Policy Studies * Correctional Association of New York * Criminal Justice Policy Foundation * DC Prisoner's Legal Services Project * Disciples Advocacy Washington Network of the Christian Church * Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Division for Governmental Affairs * Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health * Institute for Policy Studies * Justice Policy Institute * Juvenile Law Center * Latino Commission on AIDS * National Advocates for Pregnant Women, Women's Law Project * National AIDS Fund * National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health * National Association of People with AIDS * National Association of School Psychologists * NAACP * National Black Police Association * National Black Women's Health Project * National Center on Institutions and Alternatives * National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health * National LLEGO * National Mental Health Association * National Organization for Women Foundation * National Women's Health Network * Prisoner's Legal Services of New York * Rainbow PUSH Coalition * Service Employees International Union, AFL-CIO * Unitarian Universalist Association * The United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society * US Student Association * Vocational Instruction Project * Volunteers of America * WAVE for Kids * Whitman Walker Clinic * Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual * YWCA of the USA

Drug Policy Specialists: Common Sense for Drug Policy * Drug Reform Coordination Network * DrugSense * Drug Policy Forum of Hawaii * Drug Policy Forum of Texas * Drug Policy Foundation * Drug Policy Reform Group of Minnesota * Family Council on Drug Awareness * Family Watch * Efficacy * Harm Reduction Coalition * Human Rights and the Drug War * The Lindesmith Center * Marijuana Policy Project * Mothers Against Misuse and Abuse * Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies * National Alliance of Methadone Advocates * National Association for Public Health Policy, Council on Illicit Drugs * National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws * New Mexico Drug Policy Foundation * North American Syringe Exchange Network * November Coalition * Patients Out of Time * ReconsiDer Forum on Drug Policy * Research and Policy Reform Center * St. Ann's Corner of Harm Reduction

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As recently as the 1980s, journalists were the most ardent defenders of the media status quo and were notorious for their sensitivity to any criticism of media institutions or their craft. That seems like ancient history today, as dozens of prominent journalists have penned laments and critiques of the sacrifice of journalism on the altar of corporate profit and commercial values. University journalism programs are flooded with applications for teaching positions from journalists desperate to flee their profession and willing to take sizable pay cuts to do so. It was only a matter of time until these two trends converged. Having their stories spiked unfairly or seeing other journalists suffer for excessive boldness—or simply taking in what's happened to the news during these post-O.J. times—is certainly enough to make reporters skeptical about the fate of their craft.

In their growing dissatisfaction, those who work within the media could have quite a powerful ally: the American people. Of course, this claim may sound absurd, given the unprecedented popular hostility toward what we all tend loosely to term "the media." That animus, however, could be modified—or, rather, properly directed—by an effort to make clear that what most Americans find offensive in the media is often no less painful to the people working in those very industries. The bigger the conglomerates become, the heavier the pressure on all culture industries to jack up profits in whatever way might work; and it is this overall force, not some snickering cabal of godless baby-boomers, that has TV reporters pestering the bereaved and talking sex every campaign year, screenwriters fetishizing automatic weapons, filmmakers moonlighting on sadistic videos, the TV networks veering wildly into porn, and so on.

According to a certain sector of free-market ideology, such commercial domination of our arts and journalism is a fact of nature and is not to be resisted. But that question should be for the people to decide—as it was back when the trusts were king. As there were then, so there are now some possible solutions to the problem—policies whereby we might eventually reverse the drift toward corporate oligopoly. First, we need a national debate on antitrust issues and on expanding and enriching our weak public broadcast system. We also need to find ways to let Americans take part locally in media reform. (We should consider having state and/or municipal versions of the Federal Communications Commission, comparable to state environmental agencies.) Thus far, all pertinent policy has been determined, or dictated, by the major media players themselves, in cozy consultation with the president and Congress. The recent paroxysms of deregulation—from the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which paved the way for mergers like the Viacom-CBS deal, to the FCC's recent repeal of the duopoly rule—have largely taken place behind closed doors. There have been no genuinely public hearings on this crucial issue, nor has the mainstream media dealt openly and fully with it. Rather, the press has covered it as an upbeat business story, much like the one we read right after the Viacom-CBS announcement.

Many who defend the status quo are quick to laugh off such proposals as these, asserting that the average guy could not care less about such matters and is content to sit there gaping happily at Stone Cold Steve Austin, Bud in hand. But Americans are not at all indifferent to such matters. They're merely uninformed about them—and no wonder, given the meager coverage by the mainstream print and broadcast media. (Nor has the liberal press been much better, on the whole.) When they find out the score, most Americans—and the margins are strikingly high—express strong feelings on the subject and, more importantly, express a willingness to back reforms more radical than any that were ever mentioned at the Gore Commission, a group appointed by the president to talk, and talk, about a public service code for broadcasters.

In December, and again in May, the Project on Media Ownership (PROMO) at New York University and the Bentson Foundation commissioned polls from the Washington-based Lake Snell Perry and Associates. The polls were meant to help us find out what Americans think about the government's giveaway of the digital TV spectrum to the major media corporations. The polls found, unsurprisingly, that most of those surveyed knew nothing about the giveaway. The polls also found—surprisingly—that people strongly disapproved of it once they knew the basic facts: that so few corporations sit at the top of the media food chain (34 percent had thought there were many, while 17 percent had no idea); that the digital TV spectrum is public property, worth—conservatively—$70 billion; and that those media giants get to use the airwaves for free (52 percent thought that they must be paying for the privilege) and with no public service obligations, aside from airing three hours of commercial children's shows each week.

The latest formula for devising media policy alternatives is known as "pay or play." That is, the giants should either have to pay to use the airwaves or offer an array of public service programs. According to PROMO's polls, this choice—which would allow the media giants to buy their way out of having to respect the public interest—would not please most Americans, who feel pretty strongly that the giants should pay *and* play. Eighty percent of those surveyed favored requiring major media corporations to contribute a percentage of their revenues in support of public broadcasting and also to do much more than that to compensate the people and improve the fare on television overall. Fifty-six percent of those surveyed agreed that television has been "off on the wrong direction."

The one possible requirement that the members of the Gore Commission seriously considered was a smidgen of free TV time for presidential candidates (and even that was too much "regulation" for the broadcasters on the commission). Still, the PROMO polls showed that such a rule enjoyed the support of only 49 percent of those surveyed. The most popular proposals were far more ambitious: 80 percent supported the idea of noncommercial local programming; 77 percent approved a minimum of seven hours per week of educational programming for children; 79 percent would like to see more such programming for adults; and 74 percent supported limiting commercials on kids' programs to

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six minutes per hour (while 64 percent went for an outright ban on all such advertising, as in Sweden).

These findings make it clear that many Americans might back a bold program of national media reform—much as our forebears did 100 years ago in calling on the government to rein in those triumphant trusts. For all their domination of the airwaves, both the media elite and the political establishment have failed the people—and have failed to please the people. The revitalization of democracy requires a major change in this depressing situation. The time has therefore come for both the audience and the workers of the media system to collaborate on true reform, so that there will be no more Viacoms. ■

Podgorica Dispatch

FRYed

By Anna Husarska

Soon after NATO troops entered Kosovo, the tourism minister of neighboring Montenegro proposed that they use his republic's beautiful coast for their R&R. True, Montenegro is still technically a member, with Serbia, of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), ruled by Slobodan Milosevic. And, yes, the Second Yugoslav Army is still stationed here. But, as the Serb opposition members rubbing suntanned shoulders with high-ranking State Department officials can attest, Montenegro is a part of FRY in name only.

In contrast to the *Sturm und Drang* with which Kosovo was wrenched from Milosevic's control, Montenegro's drift away from Belgrade has been relatively smooth. On August 5, the Montenegrin government announced a new "platform": a series of proposals to loosen Montenegro's relationship with Serbia by allowing the two republics to go their separate ways in areas such as foreign policy, defense, and currency while remaining in some form of association or commonwealth. If Serbia does not accept this platform by fall, Montenegro's leaders declared, they will hold a referendum on the fate of Montenegro's relationship with Serbia—with full secession from Yugoslavia as an option. This, of course, smacked of an ultimatum. But the Montenegrins were quick to insist that it was merely a statement of the "minimum below which we cannot go."

According to opinion polls quoted by the generally independent Belgrade weekly *Vreme*, the majority of Montenegro's citizens support the move. Sixty-five percent of Montenegrins said that their republic's relationship with Serbia needs to be changed. And 40 percent expressed support for Montenegrin President Milo Djukanovic—twice the number who said they support Milosevic's man in Montenegro, Yugoslav Prime Minister Momir Bulatovic.

There has been no official reaction to the platform from Belgrade yet, but the daily *Politika*, which generally serves as Milosevic's mouthpiece, immediately complained that the platform does not even retain the initial "J" of *Jugoslavija*. Indeed, the name of the new entity would be "the Commonwealth of Montenegro and Serbia," or, in its Serb acronym, ZDCGS. This prompted one Serb reservist to comment, "How can I swear to die for a country called ZDCGS?"

But, even if Belgrade does not ratify the platform, its main tenets have already been fulfilled. In the realm of foreign policy, for instance, the paths the two republics are pursuing couldn't be more different. Montenegro is one of the most foreigner-friendly states in the Balkans, while Serbia is one of the most xenophobic. Djukanovic is racking up frequent-flyer miles on trips to the major capitals, where he is routinely welcomed as a head of state. (Last month, he was even blessed with a reception by Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, who is otherwise a staunch ally of Serbia.) Meanwhile, the only foreign travel most of Serbia's top officials can count on is a one-way trip to the war crimes tribunal in The Hague.

In matters of defense, Montenegro has demonstrated similar independence. Though the Second Yugoslav Army is stationed here, the police back Djukanovic and are almost equal to the army in numbers (though not in weaponry). As for a separate currency, plans are already under way to launch a convertible Montenegrin mark, along the lines of the convertible Bosnian mark that now functions alongside the deutsche mark. It seems that 130 million deutsche marks would be required to assure the Montenegrin mark's convertibility. And Steven Hanke, a professor at Johns Hopkins University, is now helping Djukanovic obtain the necessary credit.

The federal government's reach into Montenegro's internal affairs is already limited in other ways, as well. In contrast to Serbia, Montenegro enjoys a totally independent print and electronic media. And Montenegro has been a safe haven for many Serb journalists, such as Veran Matic (the editor of the famous radio station B-92, now renamed B2-92 after Slobo stole B-92), and opposition politicians, such as Zoran Djindjic, who sought refuge there during the NATO bombing. Most recently, Vesna Pesic fled to Montenegro after Serbia's chief prosecutor indicated that Pesic could be charged with attacking the constitutional order for implying that a "Romanian scenario" might befall Milosevic and his wife, Mira Markovic.

The economies of the two Yugoslav republics are also markedly different, thanks largely to the international assistance Montenegro is enjoying. When it comes to international aid, it seems, as the song goes, that it's "all or nothing at all." The United States has already given $20 million to Montenegro and has promised $42 million more by the end of the year. At the same time, it has announced that Serbia will be getting "not one cent" as long as Milosevic remains in power. The European Union recently lifted the sanctions against Montenegro (and Kosovo too) but not against Serbia—another de facto recognition of the "otherness" of Montenegro.

Still, Montenegro's Western friends aren't exactly pushing the republic toward full independence. During a visit here in

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August, the head of an EU delegation declared that "we want that the new relations [between Montenegro and Serbia] be within today's borders." During a press conference in Sarajevo in July, Milka Tadic, editor of the Montenegrin weekly *Monitor*, asked President Clinton, "Will you block Montenegro's independence if we will be forced to leave the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, should Milosevic remain in power?" Clinton answered: "I want the people of Montenegro to have a maximum of freedom and self-determination. But I don't think it's a good idea for the United States, or for Western Europe generally, to get in the business of redrawing national borders right now."

State Department spokesman Jamie Rubin was even more explicit on the day the platform was adopted, announcing, "We commend [the Montenegrins'] efforts to work within the FRY for reforms that would bring democracy and a better life to all Yugoslav citizens. We think they should continue to work within Yugoslavia to ensure their rights are protected." In other words: Stay put.

As if in response to those admonitions, Djukanovic told the Sarajevo weekly *Dani* a few days later: "Montenegro doesn't have ambitions to democratize Serbia and Montenegro cannot democratize Serbia. Serbia must be democratized with the help of its own democratic potentials, and Montenegro can help it achieve that goal." Then, just to make sure the message was clear, he added: "Montenegro does not want its future to be hostage to a life in a commonwealth over whose fate we have no influence."

Nevertheless, Djukanovic is acting cautiously. Instead of making defiant and pompous gestures that would challenge Serbia's sovereignty over Montenegro, he is undertaking a kind of salami secession, helping himself slice by slice to new prerogatives that will make Montenegro a fully independent state—de facto if not de jure. In the short term, this means that a final break with Yugoslavia is unlikely. In the long term, however, the FRY is, well, cooked. ■

Moscow Dispatch

The Clampdown

By Masha Gessen

Moscow is a city of conspiracy theories. Even under the best of circumstances, its politicians, journalists and—perhaps most of all—ordinary citizens are fond of discussing the mysterious forces behind all the shake-ups in the capital. And never has the city been quite so shaken as now. True, in the past eight years, Russia has seen two attempted coups, a bloody war in Chechnya, and a number of terrorist acts, including assassinations of prominent politicians and businesspeople. But, through it all, Moscow remained virtually unscathed, with just a handful of casualties and remarkable confidence in its own safety. Now, three explosions in two weeks, leaving more than 200 people dead, have plunged the city into a state of utter, palpable terror. Two days after the most recent bomb, morning radio newscasts began, as if in wartime, with the announcement that "the night in Moscow was quiet," but by afternoon reports of bags of explosives found in attics were in the news again—only to be retracted later. The terrorists' inspired geography—the first bomb went off in the city's most central shopping center, while the two large apartment buildings demolished subsequently were in bedroom communities on the outskirts—has made every resident feel vulnerable. So conspiracy theories proliferate. Word on the street is that the secret service knew of the planned explosions and chose not to prevent them; word in political circles is that the terrorist acts will be used to justify the imposition of a state of emergency, which would preempt the parliamentary elections scheduled for December and the presidential elections due next summer.

The widespread belief that the Federal Security Service (known by its Russian acronym, FSB), the agency that has succeeded the KGB, must have known of the looming terror is understandable; the idea that something so huge and deadly may have been prepared without the state's knowledge is even more frightening than the thought that the all-powerful state has sacrificed hundreds of its own citizens for some mysterious political aims. But the authorities' and law enforcement agencies' flailing reaction to the terror belies this belief. Following the second apartment building explosion, the police required every shop here to display the composite portrait of the prime suspect, a man who, apparently under an assumed name, rented warehouse space in the two now-destroyed apartment buildings. Moscow Mayor Yury Luzhkov has announced plans to place a guard in every apartment building entrance in the city (with around 120,000 entryways to guard, he will have to rely on help from either civilians or the military). Police have gone on extended duty and, aided by military patrols composed of soldiers from the presidential reserve, have stepped up document checks and raids of places where high concentrations of people from the Caucusus may be found. The police have already announced that more than 20 suspects have been detained, and search warrants have been issued for more than 100 others.

But the clearly random nature of the police measures, coupled with the Russian police's disastrous record on solving terrorist crimes, render these claims suspect. The Moscow representative office of the Chechen Republic maintains that more than 500 Chechens are currently in detention here and that most of them were arrested during document checks over the past three or four weeks. One of them, Islam Bashirov, a 32-year-old postgraduate medical student and anesthesiologist employed at the city's largest children's hospital, was arrested on August 22, before the explosions but at the time when the war in Dagestan was already feeding rumors of possible terrorist attacks. According to Hasan Batayev, a friend and colleague of

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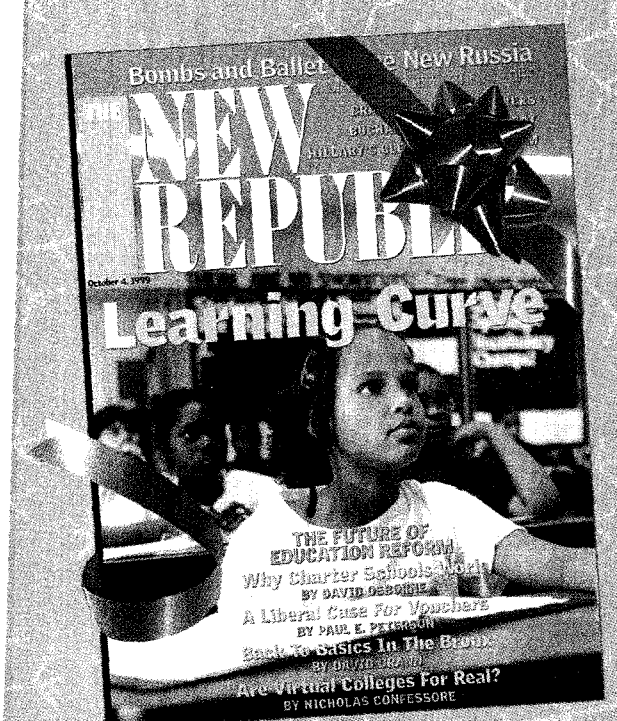

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Bashirov's, Bashirov was arrested during a raid on the medical students' dormitory where they both live, after the police found a photo album containing pictures of Chechen guerrillas. The following day the police claimed to have detained "Shamil Basayev's personal doctor." Batayev comments ruefully that Basayev, a Chechen terrorist and leader of the Chechen incursion into Dagestan, "has, unfortunately, never suffered a moment of ill health in his life."

In addition, it so happens that Bashirov is known to a number of Moscow's journalists, politicians and human rights activists because, in the early days of the war in Chechnya, he worked at a makeshift mixed-staff hospital in Grozny where wounded Chechens and Russians, both soldiers and civilians, were treated. These Good Samaritan credentials do not, of course, mean that Bashirov cannot be a terrorist, but, in conjuction with the random manner in which the police stumbled upon him, they make him a rather unlikely suspect. "The police don't care," explains Batayev. "They used to raid the dorm once a week or every few weeks. Now they've been told to check, say, 30 apartments and 45 people a day, so they come to my room in the dorm at least once a day, sometimes several times—so they can report back that they've done their checks."

Still, popular support for the emergency police measures appears to be overwhelming. Even many of the migrants from the Caucasus living here seem to support them, though for somewhat different reasons. "I think Moscow should be closed, a curfew and a state of emergency imposed," says Abuzar Bagirov, an Azeri activist and journalist who lives in Moscow. Azeris are the most numerous ethnic minority in Moscow—more than one million of them live in the city, compared to about 50,000 Chechens. They are also the most easily identifiable as being from the Caucasus since they tend to have darker complexions than representatives of other ethnic groups. As a result, Azeris are picked on by the police. But Bagirov, who has been one of the most outspoken critics of Moscow's unconstitutional passport regime and the resultant police practices, now withdraws his objections. "Now it would all be justified. If the police don't do it, with all this fear spreading, I am in danger from any crowd. They see I am black—and I am dead." (Though people from the Caucasus are indeed Caucasian, the dark hair and eyes characteristic of their ethnic group lead many Russians, who are generally fair-skinned, to refer to them disparagingly as "black.") In other words, Bagirov believes that only a state of emergency will be able to prevent anti-Caucasian pogroms in Moscow.

UNLIKE ORDINARY CITIZENS, most politicians have publicly spoken out against a state of emergency. A notable exception is the clown nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky, whose unlikely but stable alliance with the Kremlin (his is the only faction in parliament that unfailingly votes with the president) has led some journalists to speculate that a state of emergency may indeed be in the offing. No one knows quite what it would mean: the existing law on the state of emergency dates back to the late Soviet era, but, should the need and desire arise, the current parliament may push through a new law on an urgent basis. A perusal of the constitution indicates that a state of emergency would, in any case, mean vastly increased police power, a curfew, censorship, and a variety of other limitations of civil liberties.

Then again, all of this is already happening. Politicians are uniquely unanimous in their response to the terrorist attacks. President Boris Yeltsin and Mayor Luzhkov have set aside their long-standing feud to cooperate on policing Moscow. Even the staunchly opposition left-liberal Grigory Yavlinsky has declared his Yabloko Party's support for "a number of extraordinary measures in Moscow." About a dozen major cities so far are following Moscow's example, instituting document checks and summarily lifting constitutional restrictions on searches and seizures. With cities deporting or detaining people not registered to live there, freedom of movement is becoming a thing of the past.

The same goes for freedom of assembly: permits for rallies, demonstrations, or pickets will not be issued as long as the authorities can claim that any large gathering is a potential terrorist target. Meanwhile, on September 14, the parliament introduced a resolution that, should it be enacted, would severely restrict the state media's coverage of military conflicts—a major move, given that Russia's two largest TV channels belong to the state. For its part, the General Staff has quietly—and unconstitutionally—expanded the list of classified topics, which the media are banned from covering.

In other words, the only thing that significantly distinguishes what is taking shape from a state of emergency is that there is no apparent plan to cancel this December's parliamentary elections—never mind that elections in the absence of basic civil liberties could hardly be called free and fair. And there is another important difference as well: Unlike a state of emergency, which would sooner or later have to be lifted, the erosion of democracy now under way threatens to be permanent. After all, at least one test of a democracy's strength is its ability to cope with an internal security threat without resorting to repressive measures. So far, it appears that Russian democracy is still too weak to resist the immediate temptation to reach for the billy club. ■

Of Clintons and clemency.

Liberation Movement

By MICHELLE COTTLE

WAS BILL CLINTON'S offer of clemency to 16 convicted Puerto Rican terrorists a shameless attempt to curry favor with the 1.3 million Puerto Ricans of New York City, where wife Hillary is expected to run for Senate next year? No way, say the Clintons. You bet, say Republicans such as Representative Dan Burton of Indiana, who has called for an investigation. Burton's end-of-the-summer dream, no doubt, is to find a memo from the

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Hillary 2000 headquarters to President Clinton, calculating just how many votes the first lady would pick up if Bill sprang the terrorists.

But it's doubtful that Burton's dream will come true. Although any conclusion about the truth behind this episode must remain tentative—except, briefly, for the president and first lady themselves, no one in the White House or Justice Department seems willing to talk about it, even off the record—it appears that Hillary's political ambitions were not crucial to the president's decision. That, of course, doesn't mean the clemency offer is OK. Indeed, it may be even more disturbing to think that the president acted because he was persuaded that releasing these convicted felons was the right thing to do—even though it sends a strange signal about the government's resolve to fight terrorism, and even though it was, foreseeably, a probable political loser for Hillary.

Our saga begins with the prisoners' trial and conviction back in the 1980s. The prisoners were members of a violent pro-independence group, the Armed Forces of National Liberation (known as FALN, their Spanish acronym). Although the prisoners had not been convicted of any crimes resulting in death or injury, their sentences ranged up to 90 years on such charges as seditious conspiracy and federal weapons violations.

Luis Nieves-Falcon, a Puerto Rico-based sociologist, felt so strongly that the FALN members had been railroaded that he dedicated his career to their cause. But the movement got off to a slow start. One problem was that the FALN members, wanting nothing to do with the American government, had requested that supporters not lobby for their release. Another problem was that the prisoners' cause, linked as it was to the issue of Puerto Rican independence, lacked broad appeal. Surveys show that only around four percent of New York Puerto Ricans favor independence—a figure consistent with the low support reflected in island referenda on the issue over the years. The problem, then, was to generate a groundswell, showing the White House that the issue was something Puerto Rican votes hinged on. The campaign began in earnest in 1990 with a grassroots effort in Puerto Rico itself. The prisoners' advocates also courted international support, winning the backing of South African archbishop Desmond Tutu. The objective, says Nieves-Falcon, "was to create a consciousness among people that these were political prisoners and not common criminals."

Over the next couple of years, the clemency movement picked up steam. The prisoners themselves agreed to support the campaign for their release. In November of that year, Luis Gutierrez, a Puerto Rican politician in Chicago with a history of youthful *independentista* activism, was elected to the House of Representatives. Gutierrez took a special interest in the release of the FALN prisoners, two of whom had gone to grade school with him. From his congressional perch, Gutierrez helped push the clemency cause in the media. He was also involved with the original lobbying of the new Democratic administration, which began in 1993. In November of that year, Gutierrez, along with fellow Puerto Rican members of Congress Nydia Velazquez and Jose Serrano (both from the Big Apple), wrote to Attorney General Janet Reno requesting a meeting on the issue. The same month, a petition was filed with the federal pardon attorney on behalf of the prisoners.

About this time, the marketing of the prisoners' cause began to change. Originally, many of the clemency advocates wanted to link their cause to Puerto Rican independence. But, over time, leaders of the movement recognized the need to frame the appeal in less-controversial terms. "Our issue would be that, in humanitarian terms, these sentences they got were really out of proportion," says New York activist Angelo Falcon. As the humanitarian message took hold, says Falcon, the clemency effort gained momentum. "You started having people who were seriously lobbying the president. You had mainstream organizations doing this, not just fringe groups." In October 1994, some 400 Puerto Rican community leaders gathered in Washington for a meeting of Boricua First—a New York-based organization aimed at increasing the profile and influence of the Puerto Rican community—at which a resolution calling for release of the prisoners was approved.

By 1996, the movement had built a critical mass of support. Advocates of clemency—who by this time claimed the backing of such luminaries as Tutu, Coretta Scott King, and Cardinal O'Connor—held several meetings with then-White House counsel Jack Quinn. In April 1996, demonstrators hand-delivered more than 15,000 pardon petitions to the White House. In December, 100,000 letters were delivered.

Clemency advocates felt they had to achieve their goal before Clinton finished his second term. "When Clinton first walks in, he don't know nothing," says Gloria Quinones, a New York attorney and childhood friend of Dylcia Pagan, one of the prisoners. "He's from Arkansas. It takes time to educate folks." Moreover, a first-term president would be much less likely to tackle such an issue, says Quinones. Only when a president isn't facing reelection "will he dare to make this move." Thus, from the beginning, the activists' approach to the White House was pretty explicitly political; according to the New York *Daily News*, the clemency supporters presented the petition as something Clinton would be wise to dispose of before Al Gore's 2000 presidential bid. White House sources told the *Daily News* that the petitioners were informed that the issue would be decided purely on its merits.

Was it? In late 1997, Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder pledged to review the request and issue a recommendation to White House counsel Charles Ruff, who in early 1997 had replaced Quinn. The clemency advocates were told that the matter would be ruled on by the end of 1998. But, in January of that year, disaster struck in the form of Monica Lewinsky. Ruff found himself preoccupied with saving his boss. It wasn't until February of this year that the impeachment nightmare ended, freeing Ruff to return to the Puerto Rican matter. Right before Ruff decamped for private practice on August 6, his report hit the president's desk. Five days later, the president offered the conditional clemency deal.

Which brings us back to the issue of what the first lady knew, when she knew it, and just how much her Senate ambitions may have influenced the president's decision. Whether or not she was officially consulted on the matter, her recent claim that she literally "didn't know anything about the issue" before the president announced the clemency offer is hard to

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believe. For starters, she certainly encountered this issue during her "listening tour" of New York. On August 9, New York City Councilman José Rivera personally presented Hillary with a packet on clemency, including a letter asking her to "speak to the president and ask him to consider granting executive clemency" to the prisoners. Even if she promptly tossed the packet aside, Rivera told me he wasn't the only New Yorker pressing her on this issue.

Hillary may also have heard something about the issue from clemency advocate Dennis Rivera, who happens to be the head of New York's politically powerful health care workers' union. Rivera was among the state leaders whom Hillary sought out in the earliest days of her Senate explorations. And Harold Ickes, Hillary's top political strategist, is a longtime lobbyist for the Puerto Rican government and has made a pretty penny representing the commonwealth's pro-statehood faction. He may never have spoken with anyone directly involved with lobbying for clemency, but how could he not be aware of the issue and its growing prominence among Puerto Ricans?

That said, from a purely political perspective, the electoral dynamics of New York suggest that, assuming Hillary and her advisers knew about the issue, they would have thought twice before lobbying the president to offer clemency. Latino voters make up about six percent of the state's electorate. Typically, the vast majority of them vote Democratic. In 1996, for instance, the president garnered 91 percent of the state's Hispanic vote. Granted, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani tends to fare better than the average Republican: in 1997, he drew 43 percent of New York City's Hispanic vote. But Giuliani's Democratic opponent that year was Ruth Messinger, widely recognized as a total disaster, whereas Clinton is riding into town on the coattails of a president who got 91 percent of the state's Hispanic vote in 1996. Does it really make sense that Hillary and Ickes (and Bill) would have risked losing the affections of all those law-and-order suburbanites on Long Island simply to woo a few additional votes, or boost turnout, from a community already strongly inclined to go Clinton?

Moreover, Hillary's behavior since the president announced the clemency offer gives little indication that she was calling the shots. Through her campaign spokesperson, the public learned that she did in fact support the prisoners' release, assuming they accepted the attached conditions. But she had little else to say in the early days of the flap. If she was a player, her subsequent call to rescind the offer, ostensibly because of insufficient outward contrition by the prisoners, could not have been more bizarrely timed. It came less than 24 hours after the White House had privately given the prisoners a week to make up their minds whether or not to accept the deal. It would appear, then, that the president kept the news of this crucial communication from the first lady—whether out of some misguided effort to protect her from politically inconvenient information, we can't know.

Indeed, it is worth noting that, at the time of the first lady's September 4 statement, the prisoners appeared disinclined to accept the offer. All those left-wing activists now singing the president's praises and bashing Hillary for her "flip-flop" were then denouncing the clemency offer because it wasn't unconditional. One day after the offer was extended, no less a player in New York politics than Jesse Jackson was in Puerto Rico, grousing about the "extraordinary and humiliating" conditions. On August 29, thousands of protesters took to the streets of San Juan to demand an unconditional pardon.

But less than a week after Hillary's statement, twelve of the prisoners opted to accept clemency. This was no coincidence, says Carlos Romero-Barceló, Puerto Rico's non-voting delegate to Congress. "When the first lady came out with a statement that they were not sorry and that the president should cancel the offer, . . . it spurred them [the prisoners] to accept [the release]," he asserts. "They realized they weren't going to be able to get anything else by pressure."

No, we may need to look elsewhere to find the factors that tipped the balance. Start with Jimmy Carter, the man around whose neck Bill Clinton had just draped the Presidential Medal of Freedom. A longtime White House insider told me that Clinton has some inexplicable need to win the approval of his only living Democratic predecessor. If Clinton strongly opposed clemency, Carter's desire to see the Puerto Ricans freed may not have changed his mind. If Clinton had no real position, however, Carter's lobbying may have made a difference. The president also might have been swayed by Ruff—"a lawyer's lawyer," as a former White House insider describes him, whose numb political fingerprints and highly legalistic view of the world might have predisposed him to accept the argument that the prisoners had been unduly punished (just as it helped him craft key exculpatory arguments in a certain impeachment trial). Moreover, Deputy Attorney General Holder reportedly supported clemency, a fact likely reflected in the case review he sent the counsel's office, which apparently muted the fact that all federal law enforcement agencies had recommended against clemency. And, if Ruff—for whatever reason—decided that clemency was in order, Clinton was unlikely to override the man who had saved his bacon during the Monica disaster. (Both Ruff and Holder declined to discuss the matter.)

Whatever the truth is, two results seem clear. First, the controversy will leave an inaccurate imprint on the public's perception of Puerto Ricans' political attitudes. Romero-Barceló has repeatedly expressed concern that demonstrations on behalf of the prisoners would make stateside Americans think that Puerto Ricans advocate terrorism. "The real freedom fighters are the 197,000 Puerto Ricans who served the nation in times of war during this century," he has said.

Result number two is that, in the end, the first lady won't suffer unduly among Puerto Rican voters. Her disavowal of the clemency offer was carefully crafted, a classically Clintonian flourish that leaves all of her political options open. She did not criticize the president's offer on its merits; she merely pointed out that, if the prisoners were so hesitant to accept the parole conditions, perhaps they shouldn't be released. Now that they've accepted the offer, the first lady can claim she has always supported clemency, as long as the prisoners agreed to the terms. She knows perfectly well that New York's Democratic Puerto Rican activists aren't going to bolt to Giuliani over this. Indeed, the Puerto Rican leadership in New York already seems willing to grant her a pardon. As Roberto Ramirez, the Democratic assemblyman from the Bronx, has said, "we must move on." ■

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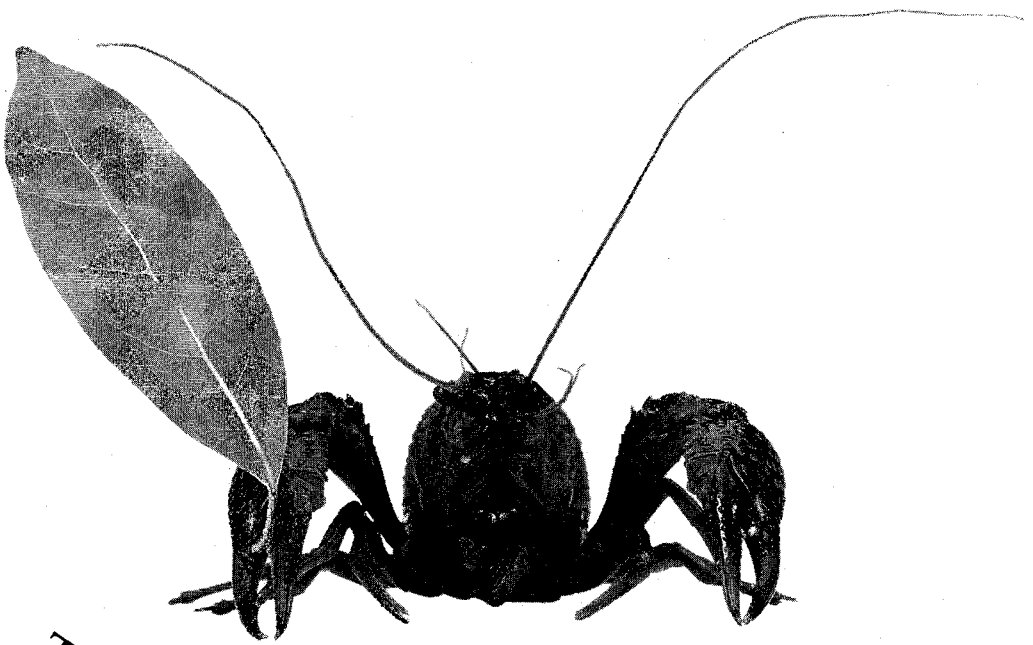
"More than 200 years ago, French-speaking settlers were forced to leave their land of Acadie, which the British had taken over and renamed Nova Scotia, and make their way to the wetlands of southern Louisiana. Here, without much notice, they built steep-roofed houses to slough off nonexistent snow and **adapted French cuisine to the crawfish** and muskrat they found in abundance in the pelican-tended swamps." — *The Almanac of American Politics 2000* on Louisiana's Congressional District 7.



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National Journal

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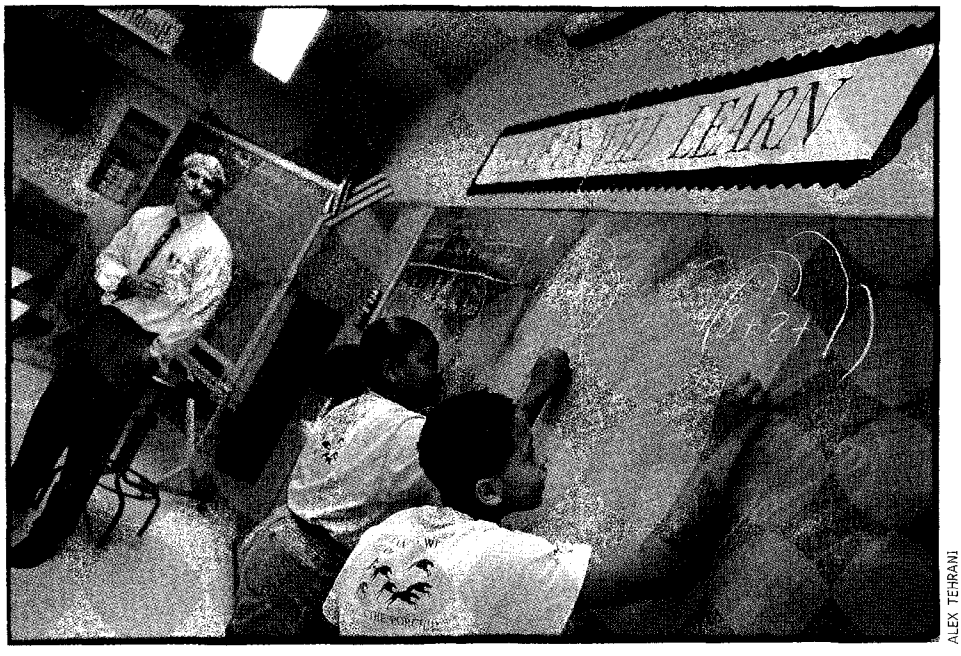
A public school that works.

Back to Basics in the Bronx

By David Grann

"Pow! pow!" says one of the kids, his finger pointed like a pistol at another boy's head. "You're a dead motherfucker, you hear me?" The other kid falls back a step as if he had actually been shot; then, ready to strike back the old-fashioned way, he makes a fist. While other students look on, eager for something, anything, to happen, a security guard steps between the two combatants. "Get outta here," he shouts. "Go home." The boys stare at each other in the squalid heat—their baseball caps flipped backward, their hands coiled like springs—and then slowly disperse in the direction of the Andrew Jackson housing projects across the street. It is three o'clock in the afternoon, and the first day of classes at I.S. 151, a middle school in the heart of the South Bronx and one of the lowest-performing schools in the district, is officially over. But, as the kids race through the open metal gates into the streets, another commotion, even louder, erupts on the fourth floor of the school building. "What room is this?" someone shouts. Suddenly two dozen voices cry out in unison:



ALEX TEHRANI

This is the room
That has the kids
Who want to learn
To read more books!

A train rattles by outside the window. The teacher, a tall black man with thick arms and legs, asks, "Is KIPP in the house?" and the students begin to pound their feet against the floor, chanting over the clacking rails:

No need to hope
For a good-paying job
With your first-grade skills
You'll do nothing but rob
You got to read, baby, read!
You got to read, baby, read!

As the cries filter out the window, there seems to be something slightly unnatural about them, as if they were coming from one of those TV ads for literacy the networks play during Saturday morning cartoons. But the sounds of the KIPP school are so familiar by now that few passersby even seem to notice them. Set in one of the city's worst neighborhoods, and in the same building as I.S. 151, the Knowledge Is Power Program has become an educational oasis, a public school that is defiantly and mysteriously working. Founded by two recent Ivy League graduates in conjunction with a similar program in the barrios of Houston, Texas, the Bronx school, as well as its Texas counterpart, has produced such high success rates that other educators have suspected both schools—despite having absolutely no evidence—of somehow manipulating their statistics. At KIPP Academy in Texas, where nine out of ten students are Hispanic and need assistance for school lunches, only about one-third of the students who enrolled could pass the state's reading and math tests; after only a year in the program, more than 91 percent passed.

In the Bronx, the results have been just as miraculous. In two years, reading scores have jumped by 54 percent. More than 70 percent of the students are now scoring above the national average in math, making the KIPP Academy the highest-performing public middle school in the Bronx for the second year in a row. What's more, it has remained—in contrast to the KIPP Academy in Texas, which recently became an open-enrollment charter school—part of the public school system.

David Levin launched the original KIPP in 1994 with his friend Michael Feinberg, after they had spent two years as elementary school instructors in the nationwide program

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Teach for America. It started as a special college-prep program for fifth-graders within the Garcia Elementary School in Houston, initially open to anyone in the school and eventually to anyone within the district. In the first year, 45 students signed up. But school officials were less enthusiastic, and the program was forced to hopscotch from building to building in search of a permanent home. Even during this struggle, Levin decided to expand to New York City. He lobbied the New York authorities, insisting that he could do what most critics said he couldn't: build a successful middle school from scratch in the heart of the Bronx. In 1995, after much resistance, the Board of Education relented and gave him space, but ended up paying only for the faculty, leaving Levin to raise money for almost everything else—textbooks, music equipment, even phone services.

As word of KIPP's success has spread, academics from Argentina to Japan have descended upon it, trying to uncover its secrets. President Clinton recently invited the 29-year-old Levin to the White House. A crew from "60 Minutes" has visited, gathering data for an upcoming broadcast. When I arrive one morning, two journalists from Sweden are roaming the corridors with their microphones. "We could learn from this" in Stockholm, one of them tells me.

The roughly 240 students in grades five through eight are quietly filing into their classrooms, which are named after universities. "UCLA will always meet over here," says Levin. "NYU over here." The students are dressed in bright yellow shirts that read "Knowledge Is Power" on the front and on the back list "The Laws of Success": "self-confidence," "a definite chief aim," "self-control." In the main hallway, students first pass a giant replica of the contract they signed vowing to attend school some 67 percent more than the average student, including on Saturdays and during summers, and then other signs motivating them to a higher order: "Excuses are for losers!" "There are no shortcuts!"

Between classes, the students are required to stand in neat rows, backs ramrod straight and mouths closed, and march along the black lines that bisect the corridors. Everything is monitored, from diction to dress. The boys are not allowed to wear baseball hats, stocking caps, or "do-rags." The girls can't wear makeup or artificial nails. Beepers and cell phones are not permitted. No baggy pants or hoop earrings, either—because, as Rachel Ademola, an eighth grader, tells me, "they may give you an attitude, and if you have the wrong attitude then you might not get a job."

In contrast to the national trend toward multiculturalism, there is a conscious effort at KIPP to transform the students' culture into that of the mainstream. While I sit in on a music class, one of the girls begins to raise her voice in anger at the teacher, her arms folded and her chin cocked to the ceiling. "You're going ghetto on me," the teacher shoots back. "Don't start going ghetto on me."

At KIPP, teachers are willing to do something other schools are increasingly afraid to do: teach morality and decorum. "Everything we do is about building character skills," says Fred Shannon, a 30-year veteran of the New York public school system who now selects and trains staff for KIPP. In music class, when one of the girls sits with her legs spread apart, the teacher assumes a parental role. "When you have a short skirt on," he says, "you must sit a certain way." He instructs the female students on how to keep their skirts from "riding up" and their legs together. If a girl sees her classmate sitting the wrong way, he says, she should quietly inform the person, and, if a boy notices, he should politely tell another girl to say something. "We must all learn to act like ladies and gentlemen," he says.

This KIPP culture is maintained the old-fashioned way, through after-school detention, suspension, and even, on rare occasions, expulsion. (In Houston, miscreants must sit on "the porch" while other students walk past them all day.) The teachers, however, rely less on force than on a kind of reverse peer pressure. When one student misbehaves in class, all the students must stand, leave the room, and reenter in silence. If one student talks on the stairwell, the whole class has to walk back down the four flights and up again.

Along with these punishments, the school offers the students elaborate incentives to behave—to act like "KIPPsters." Every week, the students receive points based on their performance and conduct. These are calculated on forms that resemble actual paychecks, which the students and their parents must endorse on the back. The students can then use these "checks" to purchase materials at the school store, including books, T-shirts, even computers. In short, they are paid to study—a fact that many critics consider crass at best and unethical at worst. "You want to inspire them to do better, but you also need to be pragmatic," says Marina Bernard, a slender Haitian-American who is one of the school's original teachers.

While the school uses the "paycheck" system to teach youths to earn rewards and manage their money, it also serves as an introduction to the working world. Every Friday, even the ten-year-olds dress like corporate executives, in suits and ties or full-length skirts, their long cornrows often tucked under their blazer collars, their braids pulled into buns. "The rest of the world goes casual," says Levin. "We go professional."

The results of this unabashed indoctrination are evident at noon each day, when the students from the KIPP Academy and from I.S. 151 flow into the same cafeteria. On the left side of the room, the I.S. 151 students swarm around the tables, screaming and yelling, their baseball caps turned backward, their high-tops unlaced, while a man with a bullhorn walks back and forth, futilely squawking at them. On the right side, the KIPP students—many of them the recipients of glares from the other side of the room—sit neatly across from each other, their shirts emblazoned with "The Laws of Success," their voices hushed. When a teacher wants their attention, he simply claps his hands once and everyone falls silent.

It is this controlled environment, the KIPP instructors say, that allows them to do what is most important: teach. "This removes all the nonsense" that distracts from the classroom, says Shannon. And, in an age of radical new theories of how to teach children, the KIPP curriculum is a return to the

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"three Rs": reading, writing, and arithmetic. "There is nothing fancy," Shannon says.

Instead, the creativity lies in the lesson plans, which are carefully constructed to keep students engaged from 7:25 a.m. until 5 p.m. In math, the students yell out "Oohahh!" after solving a problem, then clap their hands and chant, "Piece of cake, piece of cake." They learn the multiplication tables as raps. In English, they read *Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* and then create their own fantasy factory with hand-wrapped candy bars.

Despite all this remarkable stuff, there's something oddly mundane about the school. Rather than by a secret formula, it is governed by the same forces that govern most professions: discipline, accountability, high standards. Which raises the question: Can KIPP work elsewhere? Doubters say that the school maintains an unfair advantage in resources. In fact, though Levin raises private funds, the school's overall budget remains comparable to that of other schools in the city—only it's spent more creatively. Still other doubters say that the school is somehow "skimming"—getting the best students. There is some truth to this. Because parents choose to send their kids to KIPP and sign a contract stating that they agree to the rigorous hours, the students are more likely to come from families with at least a vague commitment to education. Yet applicants for the fifth grade are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis and seem to reflect the neighborhood.

One day after classes, I bump into a wiry kid from the Andrew Jackson housing projects who tells me that his mother has just gotten out of jail and that his father died before he was born. He has already been suspended from the KIPP school four times, he says, for "acting crazy." His pants hang down off his hips as he retreats back into the projects, where, he told me, he recently found an automatic hidden in the grass. Across the street, his friends are listening to music and shooting baskets in the dusk, and he looks toward them as if unsure whether to join in. Then, all of a sudden, Levin appears in the distance and begins to yell at him. "If you want to be famous and talk to reporters," Levin shouts, "you better make sure you wear a belt tomorrow." The boy stops and stares at him for a long moment. He seems to be thinking of something else—maybe the gun, or maybe his mother, or maybe simply his friends playing ball. Then, in an instant, he smiles, turns, and heads straight home. ■

Education online.

The Virtual University

By NICHOLAS CONFESSORE

DISTANCE LEARNING, EDUCATION gurus like to say, is as old as the horse and buggy. After all, farmers in the United States and Europe were taking correspondence courses since the time of the industrial revolution. Nevertheless, distance learning's latest incarnation—the "virtual university," replete with the dazzling accoutrements of the information revolution—has recently been the subject of bitter academic debate. When the Colorado-based Jones International University (JIU)—a.k.a. "The University of the Web™"—became, in March, the first fully accredited, entirely online university, the American Association of University Professors promptly dispatched a letter to the accrediting agency to express its "shock and dismay." One Georgetown University professor calls Internet-based distance learning "a new version of a trade school" and, worse, "the joke of the twenty-first century."

But the ten students in Anne Kellerman and Palmer Agnew's virtual classroom are generally content to ignore the furor. After all, each holds down a full-time job, most have more pressing worries such as kids and car payments, and at the moment—week five of "F2058: Internet and Online Teaching Tools"—they are trying to master the vagaries of Web boards, HTML, and RealAudio.

NICHOLAS CONFESSORE is a staff writer at *The American Prospect*.

F2058 is one of approximately 150 courses offered by OnlineLearning.net (OLN), a private, Los Angeles-based company loosely affiliated with the University of California at Los Angeles. Though OLN's catalog—which ranges from "D8310T: Accounting for Non-Accountants" to "D7491T: Writing the Situation Comedy"—is heavy on business and information technology, the classes themselves are similar to their low-tech antecedents. F2058 has lectures (which students read online), assigned readings (some in textbooks, some from Web-based sources), projects (group and individual), and discussions (via group e-mail lists). The difference, of course, is that none of the students in F2058 have ever met. Mary Anne Mather lives in Massachusetts; Bill Knapp lives in Jersey City; Mike Pastore hails from Bellevue, Washington; Patrick Lim is in Hong Kong; others are scattered throughout California. For that matter, instructors Kellerman and Agnew live in upstate New York, and the classroom—such as it is—exists on a server in Toronto.

To the students in F2058, at least, the attractions of distance learning are obvious: in education jargon, OLN's classes are almost entirely "asynchronous." Students are expected to read the week's lectures and complete projects on schedule, but exactly when they do so is up to them. Exchanges take place over hours or days—whenever students choose to log on and post a question or response. Students need only a mid-range PC, a modem, and an Internet connection to participate; if you can surf the Web and send e-mail, you can take a class. The classes, in turn, run on

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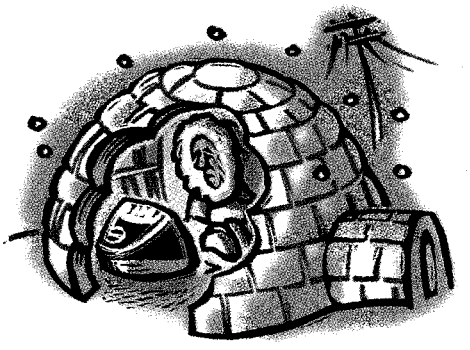
relatively simple, self-installing software. You can register online, pay online, and go through orientation online.

Whether Internet-based distance education is as good as traditional education is debatable. That students—particularly working adults—are flocking to such programs is undeniable. In August 1996, OLN had 17 students. This fall, it will have enrolled roughly 6,000 people hailing from every state and 43 countries. By the end of the millennium, predicts OLN's CEO, John Kobara, "we project well over 10,000 in enrollments."



BILL RUSSELL

INTERNET-BASED DISTANCE learning isn't quite the future of higher education. Though "traditional" four-year and two-year institutions have lately been jumping on the distance-learning bandwagon, the undergraduate degree earned entirely online is still a rarity—even JIU requires that those matriculating in its bachelor of arts program have already earned 60 credits at another, usually non-virtual, university.

The natural market for distance learning lies, instead, within the fastest-growing segment of the otherwise stagnant higher education industry: continuing and professional education for working adults. According to the College Board, almost half of all people enrolled in higher education in the United States are participants in part-time classes or training—one reason why some of the most prestigious universities in the country (including Harvard, Stanford, Duke, Columbia, and the University of Chicago) run continuing education programs, or "extension schools," often at a big profit. Last year, according to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, New York University's School of Continuing and Professional Studies (SCPS) pulled in revenues of $92 million, while the Harvard Extension School—which serves nearly 60,000 part-time students—earned a hefty $150 million.

Now, many of these schools—and, increasingly, prestigious business schools eager to tap the higher-end "executive education" market—have seized upon distance learning as their brave new world. UCLA's continuing education program, UCLA Extension—which enrolls about 70,000 students per year, earning revenues of roughly $42 million—is the preeminent example. In essence, OLN is a for-profit spin-off of UCLA Extension. Originally founded as Home Education Network to distribute and market videotapes of UCLA Extension's lectures, OLN began offering online classes in 1997, under a licensing and royalty arrangement with the school. Each of the courses OLN offers is also offered by UCLA Extension, and the syllabi are identical. OLN, in turn, has various corporate partners and backers: it is "a Premier Course Provider of the AT&T Learning Network® Virtual Academy," according to its website, and investors include Houghton Mifflin, St. Paul Venture Capital, and the Times-Mirror Company.

Such distance-learning partnerships are becoming increasingly common. Last October, NYU spun off NYU Online, Inc., a private company—to which NYU supplied $1.5 million in start-up capital—that will offer noncredit, online courses to corporate training programs. (NYU's SCPS, in partnership with IBM, also offers 45 online courses through its "Virtual College" program.) Stanford, the University of Chicago, the London School of Economics, Columbia, and Carnegie Mellon have all signed deals with UNEXT.com, which will "provide state of the art learning engines and knowledge as rapidly as it is created and taught at the world's most respected and distinguished educational institutions." In January, the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton Direct program, a division of the Wharton School of Business, inked a deal with the Los Altos, California, based Pensare, Inc., which will develop and market Wharton-derived online "courseware"—combinations of short lessons, examples, and exercises—to training programs at the likes of Unisys and Hallmark.

HERE, TOO, THE attractions are obvious. New technologies have greatly accelerated the pace of workplace change, fueling the millennial boom in continuing and professional education. Extension schools can only enroll so many students, but private distance-learning companies can—in theory—fit in anybody who wants to enroll. And why partner with community colleges when you can strike a deal with UCLA? Why develop courseware with Penn State's Smeal business school (ranked number 49 in the country by *U.S. News & World Report*) when you can enlist the prestige and customer-drawing power of Wharton (ranked number two)? Private distance-learning companies get to sell, as one Pensare vice president put it, "well-recognized, branded content," while the universities get a stream of licensing or royalty fees—not to mention a slice of the Silicon Valley gold

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rush. In 1998, corporations spent about $100 million on Internet-based training; by 2002, according to the International Data Corporation, they will be spending about $6 *billion* per year.

EDUCATORS ARE A naturally conservative bunch. So, it's not surprising that many tend to see distance learning as a sort of educational alternate reality where classes become "content," universities become "providers," and corporate representatives speak enthusiastically of "branding." But, for the most part, earlier debates about distance learning are beginning to subside. The prevailing attitude now seems to be one of cautious optimism: distance learning has potential, but, like anything else, it needs to be researched, tested, and reviewed. One measure of the diminishing hostility: In August, the Department of Education announced $10 million in awards to colleges, universities, companies, and nonprofit organizations to "help adults gain access to distance-learning opportunities." "It's not an issue—it's a phenomenon," says Kay Kohl, executive director of the University Continuing Education Association, "and universities are adapting to it."

But vocal critics remain. Some teachers worry that software and computer companies have managed to fool schools into making massive investments in distance learning and other technologies without any real pedagogical justification. David F. Noble of Toronto's York University, an oft-quoted critic of distance learning, is even more harsh: distance learning is "pedagogically meaningless," he told me. OLN, Noble insists, is "a scam."

Indeed, it is worth wondering what, exactly, is the pedagogical connection between UCLA and OLN—or, for that matter, between UCLA and UCLA Extension. According to UCLA administrators, the extension school curricula are subject to the normal faculty review procedures for any course at UCLA. With syllabi in hand, UCLA Extension then recruits "instructors" (the school prefers to avoid the term "faculty"), 90 percent of whom are adjuncts, to teach the courses, rather than using full-time UCLA faculty. OLN operates similarly: Its courseware is based on UCLA Extension course material, and the teachers are recruited by UCLA and trained by OLN. "The policies that govern our [distance-education] program," notes Robert Lapiner, dean of UCLA Extension, "are identical to the policies that govern our bricks-and-mortar program." But with UCLA Extension-derived courseware sluicing through the Internet, OLN instructors need not be UCLA faculty or even residents of Los Angeles—and, in fact, about 15 percent live elsewhere.

But this is a long way from saying that the teachers are unqualified or the courses are shoddy, as many critics of distance learning seem to imply. Though they lack some of the benefits and job security of tenured faculty, adjuncts and part-timers at UCLA Extension and OLN have either academic or significant professional credentials. Nor does the actual OLN operation quite fit Noble's caricature. "This is the second course I've taken online, and I can assure you it will not be my last," one F2058 student wrote to me in an e-mail. "Look on the map and you'll find that the closest university to me is Chico State—about 75 miles away.... The classes are not 'easy'—I have put in every bit as much time and effort into these online courses as I did into my graduate seminars for my master's degree." F2058's teachers, Kellerman and Agnew, are themselves quick to establish that distance learning has its limits. "Nobody thinks that even the best online teaching is as good as [traditional teaching]," they wrote to me in an e-mail. "Our goal is to provide enough interaction ... to make online education approximately as good as face-to-face education in a typically large class. We strive to overcome the online limitation of using mainly text, with only a few images and a little audio, by eliciting continual, highly active student involvement."

Indeed, during the weeks I followed F2058, Kellerman and Agnew were constantly prodding and responding to their students. Jim Jepsen, the course manager (each OLN class has an "online concierge" to walk students through the software), was never hard to find, and Vi To, the director of course management, answered technical questions in the various class and campus-wide chat rooms so frequently as to appear omnipresent. In addition to offering excellent tech support, OLN, unlike some distance-learning outfits, is fully accredited, which means its students don't have to worry that their credits won't be accepted elsewhere. For that matter, there are no surly registrars at OLN, no dingy classrooms, no lines at the bookstore. There is only a sleek, professional, customer-oriented provider of educational content.

STILL, IT'S NOT clear whether a student taking a class at OLN—even a well-designed, fully supported class with dedicated instructors—is even close to getting an experience comparable to that of a student taking a course at UCLA. (For that matter, it's not clear what NYU's non-virtual continuing education students are getting that Manhattan College students are not, or what any student gets out of, say, an accounting class at a brand-name extension school that is much different from what they would get from taking the same class at a good community college.) Moreover, what significance do school names really have, as "branded" educational "content" moves further and further off the campus, away from faculty and into the living room or office cubicle? The real question, then, for consumers of distance learning may not be whether the OLN course is as good as the UCLA course—but, rather, whether it's any better than online courses soon to be offered by North Carolina's Davidson County Community College.

Or maybe not. There is a rapidly growing army of busy professionals who demand reputable continuing education; many of them are more than happy to put up with the potential shortcomings of distance learning in order to enjoy its convenience. And, in a competitive, credential-conscious labor market, a company such as OLN offers an eminently marketable credential: UCLA. "I picked UCLA because their classes looked good and their interface was impressive," one OLN student said in a recent posting to the company's online "student lounge." "[But] the name recognition doesn't hurt," he added. Education is a business—and businesses, after all, have customers, not students. ■

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New data counters old fears.

A Liberal Case for Vouchers

By Paul E. Peterson

Perhaps you're familiar with the "skimming" argument against school vouchers. As this line of thinking goes, the parents most likely to opt for vouchers will be the ones who are already most involved with their children's education—which, on average, will mean the parents of the most motivated and gifted students. Once the best and the brightest flee to private schools, public schools will only get worse; this debilitating cycle will continue until the best students are skimmed off and the only kids left in public schools are those with the fewest skills and the least-involved parents—in other words, the students most in need of help. "Vouchers are like leeches," says North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt. "They drain the lifeblood—public support—from our schools." Bob Chase, president of the National Education Association, concurs: Establishing a system of vouchers, he says, would be like "bleeding a patient to death."

We liberals are sensitive to this argument because we know that needy students are now getting the short end of the educational stick. Yet, while liberals are right to be concerned about these students, new data from a privately financed voucher program in Texas suggest that we should give vouchers a second, more serious look. Far from aggravating income and racial disparities in education, vouchers may actually help to ameliorate them.

In April 1998, the Children's Educational Opportunity (CEO) Foundation offered vouchers to any low-income child in San Antonio's Edgewood school district. Almost all of the district's 13,490 students were eligible for the program, because Edgewood is among the poorest of the city's twelve school districts—more than 90 percent of its students are economically disadvantaged, and 93 percent are Latino. (Nonetheless, the district, which receives 90 percent of its funding from state and federal aid, spends more than $6,000 per pupil, which exceeds the state average.)

The vouchers were hardly paltry: Providing up to $3,600 a year for elementary school students and $4,000 a year for those in high school, they would cover tuition at most San Antonio private schools, which for voucher students averages less than $2,000 annually. And, once a child's family decided to use vouchers, the CEO Foundation promised to continue providing them until that child graduated from high school, as long as he or she still lived in Edgewood. In addition, students could use the vouchers anywhere in San Antonio, even in public schools outside Edgewood that were willing to accept them. In the program's first year (the 1998–1999 school year), approximately 800 Edgewood students made use of the vouchers.

The Texas Federation of Teachers howled that private schools would "cherry pick" the best students and predicted the program would "shorten the honor roll" in public schools. "Right now, I don't have the profile of every child," Edgewood School Superintendent Dolores Muñoz said on PBS's "News Hour with Jim Lehrer," "[but] I guarantee you that at least 80 percent will be the high-achieving students."

To make matters worse, stories of private schools shutting out applicants quickly circulated. Edgewood's school board president, Manuel Garza, wrote in the *San Antonio Express News* that he had received a call from "a mother . . . for help because their application to the [Horizon program] had been denied. . . . I asked why she was denied. The mother said she was a single mom, had two jobs, and was told she was unacceptable because she could not dedicate time for extracurricular requirements, like helping out with homework and fund-raising." In other words, not only were the voucher students an unusually strong group academically, but the private schools were then allegedly winnowing their ranks even further.

But data from a recently completed evaluation (funded by the Packard Foundation) that included results from tests of student achievement and questionnaires filled out by parents during testing sessions yields a more complicated, and more encouraging, picture. (Standard techniques were employed to ensure a representative sample, and Mathematica Policy Research, a well-respected evaluation firm with contracts with the Department of Education and other government agencies, collected the data.)

It's true that the private schools had only limited capacity, in part because the program was unveiled in April and went into effect the very next August. Yet there is little evidence that the schools were weeding out all but the best students. For example, on the math component of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, on which the national median score falls at the fiftieth percentile, the voucher students, upon arriving at their new schools, scored at the thirty-seventh percentile, while the students who stayed in public school scored at the thirty-fifth—a difference that is not statistically significant.

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In reading, voucher students scored at the thirty-fifth percentile, while public school students scored at the twenty-eighth. This difference is significant but is hardly the gaping disparity voucher opponents predicted. In addition, just 23 percent of the voucher students had been enrolled in programs for gifted students, while 29 percent of the students who stayed in public school were.

These results are consistent with analyses conducted by the research department at the Edgewood public schools, which compared the test scores of students who later accepted vouchers with the scores of those who remained behind. Never made public, perhaps because it directly contradicted the school superintendent's assertions, the research did not show a significant "skimming" effect. In the authors' technical language: "[F]ew statistically significant differences [in average test scores] are to be found between [the voucher] students ... and those not ... identified" as voucher students.

Apparently, families have many reasons for choosing private schools. They may be looking for better schools for children who are doing poorly just as often as they are looking for other schools for bright youngsters. But admission to private school is one thing; keeping one's place in school is another. Since private schools can suspend or expel students more easily than public schools can, critics say, they are able to weed out the worse students. Again, the numbers refute this seemingly logical argument. Suspension rates were equal for the voucher students and the Edgewood public school students—around five percent for both groups. And what about income? Average household income was nearly identical—right around $16,000. The students' ethnic background (96 percent Latino) and their levels of welfare dependency and residential stability were also extremely similar. Quite apart from suspensions, the voucher students were more likely to remain in the same school for the year and were just as likely to return to that school the next year.

This isn't to say that there were no distinctions whatsoever among the students. Eight percent of voucher students were enrolled in some sort of special education, while the figure for public school students was 16 percent. There were also some modest demographic differences between the two groups of parents. The average mother of a voucher student had completed twelve years of education, compared to eleven years for the average public school mother. Half of the voucher-student mothers worked full time, compared to just 37 percent of the mothers who kept their kids in public school. Only 22 percent of voucher-student mothers were on food stamps, but 33 percent of public school mothers were.

BUT THESE SMALL distinctions are hardly enough to justify the extreme resistance to vouchers. For one thing, those helped by vouchers were far from well-off—the parents reported making less than $16,000 a year! There are plenty of other government programs, from Pell Grants to the Earned Income Tax Credit, that predominantly benefit the working poor, and nobody (well, almost nobody) protests them on the grounds that they don't benefit people further down the economic ladder. Support for vouchers is particularly strong among minority families, especially those living in cities. According to a recent survey undertaken at Stanford University, 85 percent of the inner-city poor favor a voucher plan, compared with 59 percent of more advantaged parents who live in the suburbs. Asked if they "strongly" favor a voucher plan, 58 percent of poor urbanites agreed, compared to just one-third of upper-middle-class suburbanites.

More important, though, vouchers have the potential to improve socioeconomic and racial integration, as long as they are generous enough to cover most of the tuition and as long as schools are prohibited from racial or ethnic discrimination in admissions. Remember, our public school system is *already* plagued by vast inequalities. Because most school funding comes through local property taxes, disparities among affluent suburban schools and city or rural schools are legendary. The story on race is no better: Despite three decades of busing, public schools today are more segregated, not less. In 1997, 69 percent of African Americans attended schools composed predominantly of minority students, up from 64 percent in 1973. For Latinos, the increase is much steeper, from 57 percent to 75 percent over the past 25 years. Today, despite federal interventions ranging from Head Start to compensatory education, we have disturbingly large test-score gaps between cities and suburbs, as well as between blacks and whites. According to one 1994 survey, only 43 percent of urban fourth-graders read at a basic level, compared with 63 percent of students in nonurban areas.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS, ON the other hand, are already more racially integrated than public ones. University of Texas Professor Jay Greene estimates that private school classrooms are seven percentage points more integrated than public schools. Examining Department of Education data, he also found more interracial friendships in private schools than in public ones (as reported by students) as well as less interracial fighting (as reported by administrators, teachers, and students). And, sure enough, in all the voucher programs for which we have been able to obtain ethnic data, students were less likely—or at least no more likely—to be attending segregated schools than students remaining in public school. This isn't surprising, given that private schools can draw students from across school district boundaries, and religious schools provide a common tie that cuts across racial lines.

Oh, yes, and how about those voucher families in Edgewood—what do they think of their new schools? More than 60 percent say they are "very satisfied" with the schools' academic quality, compared to 35 percent of the Edgewood public school parents. Similar differences in satisfaction levels are reported by parents regarding school safety, school discipline, and quality of teaching.

There are, of course, many other arguments against voucher programs, from the church-and-state issue to questions about for-profit schools. I don't happen to buy those arguments, either, but I'm happy to continue letting pilot programs provide a testing ground. Given the potential of vouchers to achieve more racial and socioeconomic diversity in education—one of the great goals of education reformers since the 1960s—you'd think more liberals would be open to experimenting with them. ■

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The benefits of charter schools.

Healthy Competition

By David Osborne

A decade ago, a group of parents in Forest Lake, Minnesota, decided they wanted to create a Montessori elementary school. They had kids in a Montessori preschool, and some had older children in the local public school. The parents were afraid the love of learning they saw emerging in their preschoolers, who were encouraged to follow their interests and initiate their own projects, would be squelched in the public school. They looked into starting a private school but quickly realized they couldn't afford the tuition. So they approached their school district and proposed a public Montessori school. And they got nowhere.

"Every meeting resulted in, 'No, we can't do this,'" said Mark Gilchrist, a public school teacher in another district. "And the reasons weren't that it was an educationally poor concept. In fact, every school administrator and teacher we talked to agreed that this was very sound educationally. But it was, 'We don't know how we would arrange the busing,' or 'We don't have magnet schools, we have neighborhood schools,' or 'How would we train teachers?' It was, 'Yes, this is a good program, but we can't do it, we can't do it, we can't do it.'"

Then, in 1991, the Minnesota legislature passed the nation's first charter school law, which allowed parents and others to create new public schools that would be free from most district regulations, contingent upon local school board approval. The parents passed the hat, hired a consultant to help them draft a charter school proposal, and made their case to the school board.

These were voters, so the board members didn't want to say no. But the board members also knew that, if they authorized the school, several hundred thousand dollars would be deducted from their district budget each year to fund the charter school. "You could see them adding and subtracting the amounts of money that each child represented," said Jane Norbin, one of the parents.

Finally, one board member asked, "Why don't we find a way to do this in the public school?" The board directed the administration to work with the parents, and, when they met, it was as if night had become day, according to Norbin. "One at a time, all the barriers that just weeks before were there, we started finding ways around. It was just amazing how those could be taken down when you wanted to take them down." The result was not a charter school but a better public school—a small Montessori-school-within-a-school that provided exactly what the parents had wanted all along.

This fall, eight years after the initial charter school law was passed, some 350,000 students will enroll in 1,684 charter schools in 32 states and the District of Columbia. Since the first charter school opened in 1992, the debate over whether to expand the number of charter schools has focused almost exclusively on the performance of individual schools. But those who invented charter schools were not just out to create a few thousand good schools. Rather, they wanted to improve all 88,000 public schools in the country by creating enough competition for money and students to force school districts to innovate. They wanted to create a public school system in which the Forest Lake story was repeated—in different permutations—thousands of times each year.

The most important question policymakers should ask about charter schools is whether they are achieving this goal. Until recently, the evidence was anecdotal. But, over the past year, several empirical studies have demonstrated that, indeed, competition works just as the reformers predicted. Unfortunately, it only happens when state charter laws unleash true competition for funds and students—and that still occurs all too infrequently.

Charter schools can be created by parents, teachers, nonprofits, or, occasionally, for-profit companies. They typically have three- to five-year charters—that is, performance contracts—with the government organizations that authorize them: local school boards, city councils, county boards, state boards of education, or, in some states, even colleges and universities. They are schools of choice, and their public funding normally comes with the students who choose them, from the district the students leave. To succeed, they must attract—and keep—enough students to finance their operations.

Although Albert Shanker, the legendary former American Federation of Teachers president, played a pivotal role in putting charter schools on the political agenda, most teachers' unions and administrators' associations still resist them. In state after state, these organizations have fought to kill or weaken charter school bills. The big issue is competition: They don't want to see public school districts laying off teachers and administrators because they have lost funding to charter schools. Unions also fear losing bargaining rights and teacher tenure in charter schools. For the adults in the system, competition can be painful—no matter how much it helps the children.

Sometimes opponents talk openly about this issue, accusing charter school proponents of trying to "destroy" the public schools. Since charter schools *are* public schools—forbidden by law from charging tuition, using selective

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admissions, teaching religion, or discriminating by race, religion, or gender—this argument is specious on its face. So, more often, the unions and their allies accuse charter schools of being elitist or of "skimming"—luring the best students out of inner-city schools. Occasionally, they allege that charters are outright scams perpetrated by con artists who seek to profit at the expense of children. Perhaps the most-often-heard argument, however, is that we should go slowly until we know whether charter schools really work. Unions have used this argument repeatedly to win and protect statewide caps on the number of charter schools, as well as provisions that charters must be approved by local school boards—the same local monopoly that charter schools are designed to break.

There is ample evidence to prove that no "skimming" effect exists in charter schools. Indeed, their percentages of minority students are equal to or higher than those of other public schools in their states. As for the argument that some charters are outright scams, the few bad apples have been quickly closed down by their chartering authorities—something that rarely happens to failing public schools. And the numbers are hardly cause for concern: the Center for Education Reform reports that charter-granting authorities had closed only 28 schools—2.3 percent of the total—by last January.

And how about the "go slowly" argument—do we know whether existing charter schools are working? Unfortunately, it's hard to prove anything related to performance, because little meaningful data exists. In the few areas where test scores are available to allow a comparison among charter schools and their surrounding districts, the data usually measures absolute test scores, not student gains from one year to the next. Hence, it doesn't tell us whether charter schools are creating more educational gains or whether they started with students who were already ahead.

One thing is certain, though: Charter schools are passing the market test. Their number continues to expand rapidly, and 70 percent of them have waiting lists, according to the most recent annual report published by the U.S. Department of Education. In a nationwide survey, 65 percent of parents rated their children's charter schools better than their former public schools; fewer than six percent rated them worse.

BUT WHAT ABOUT the competitive effect? Have charter schools really jolted education bureaucracies into greater innovation? The first nationwide empirical study of this question was published last year by an independent research unit of the University of California at Berkeley called Policy Analysis for California Education. Doctoral candidate Eric Rofes, now an assistant professor of education at Humboldt State University, interviewed 227 administrators, principals, teachers, and charter school founders in 25 school districts. He included eight states and the District of Columbia, all of which had at least two years of experience with charter schools.

Rofes found that, when charter schools took enough students and dollars away from school districts, the districts usually made significant changes. Overall, six districts "had responded energetically to the advent of charters and significantly altered their educational programs," opening new schools organized around themes or methodologies, adding courses at existing schools, and creating their own charter schools. In Bartow County, Georgia, the district had turned eight of its ten elementary schools into charter schools. Colorado's Adams County School District Twelve had "chartered numerous schools," "responded to parent requests for more 'back-to-basics' programs, and created stronger thematic programs in its traditional schools."

Another six districts exhibited what Rofes called a "moderate" response. But even these had made significant changes: Boston had responded by creating nine charterlike "pilot schools," each with a particular focus such as health sciences or dropout prevention; Mesa, Arizona, had launched all-day kindergarten and new "back-to-basics" schools; and Grand Rapids, Michigan, had opened a new school focused on environmental education and had plans for additional thematic schools. "Charter laws throughout the nation have spurred a revival of the alternative educational programs popular in the 1960s and '70s," Rofes added, "and expanded open-classroom, Montessori, Waldorf-type programs, and developmental-focused pedagogies within public schooling."

Competition has a very clear psychological effect, an administrator in Grand Rapids told Rofes. "It's a morale issue in terms of the staff. At first, they have some initial fear: Is the government out to destroy public schools? Then there's an urgency, people recognizing we're in a competitive market. When you visit a staff room in a building located near a charter school, you sense an immediate change in psychology: now we're in competition with the charter. We have to market our schools."

Indeed, the day after a charter school was awarded in one Massachusetts town, the superintendent walked into an administrators' meeting, tossed a copy of David Halberstam's book *The Reckoning* on the table, and asked, "Who do you want to be—Honda or General Motors?" As the superintendent told Rofes, "Our middle school, which is the school at which the charter school is aimed, was by any rational standard the least successful school in the district. Its test scores were mediocre.... It had a faculty that was defensive and complacent."

"The charter school was a wake-up call, like it or not," the superintendent continued. "The fact is that the parents of more than a hundred kids said, 'We want our kids out....' Charter schools served notice to everybody that complacency wasn't an option."

Rofes is not the only one who has uncovered evidence of charter schools' success. Separate studies on Arizona, Michigan, Massachusetts, and Los Angeles came to similar conclusions. The study in Arizona, undertaken by researchers at James Madison University, found that the mere possibility of competition from charters was enough to prompt "low-cost" reforms such as teacher training, while actual competition stimulated "high-cost" reforms such as all-day kindergarten programs and significant changes in curriculum. The Michigan study, by researchers at Western Michigan University, found that charter schools were stimulating districts to create all-day kindergarten programs, before- and after-school programs, and more foreign-language programs, while encouraging more parental involvement and more attention to performance on standardized tests.

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The lone discordant note has come from a study done by a research team at the University of California at Los Angeles, focusing on ten school districts in California. That study found little or no perception of pressure "to change the way they do business." But, with the exception of one very large urban district with 15 charter schools, the other nine had a total of just 24 charter schools among them. Five of the districts were large urban districts where charters had not drained enough resources to pose a real threat to the system, according to lead investigator Amy Stuart Wells. In the five rural and suburban districts, Wells reports, administrators had used the law to begin creating their own charter schools. Hence, they had seized on the charter law as a way to innovate before any outside pressure emerged.

IT DOESN'T ALWAYS take competition to spark innovation. But, particularly in the larger districts, bureaucracy stifles all but the most capable and persistent reformers. Those who run the monopoly—in this case, the school board, the superintendent, the central administration, and the principals—usually want to do what's best for the children. The problem is that innovation requires taking risks. Ted Kolderie, a pioneer of the charter school movement, explains the dynamic well: "As they consider proposals for change, the superintendent, board, principal, union, and teachers weigh the potential benefits to the kids against the risk of creating 'internal stress.' They want to help the kids. But upsetting people might create controversy. It might produce a grievance. It might lose an election. It might cause a strike. It might damage a career." Robert Wright, a teacher in San Jose, California, who once founded a public-school-within-a-school, calls it "the rule of the ringing telephone." Change brings complaints, and when the phone rings often enough—no matter how trivial the complaints are nor whom they are from—the typical administrator clamps down.

Competition forces administrators to take the initiative. If they don't shake things up, their districts and schools will shrink. They will have to lay teachers off. Angry voters may overthrow school boards, angry boards may fire superintendents, and angry superintendents may even fire principals. Consider what has happened in Massachusetts, where David J. Armor and Brett M. Peiser studied the impact of interdistrict choice for the Pioneer Institute. They conducted detailed surveys and interviews in nine of the ten school districts that had seen the most students leave for other districts. Those that lost the most students (five to six percent) and felt the most financial pain made the most changes to increase their competitiveness; those that felt the least financial pain did nothing. In general, it took a loss of two to three percent of the students to wake a district up and stimulate significant innovation.

Charter schools add power to public school choice by creating both new choices and excess capacity in the system. "The important part of school choice is that we have lots of different choices," explained former Minnesota State Representative Becky Kelso, another sponsor of the original charter school law. "If your only choice is another public school right next door that's just like the public school you're in, that's not much of a gift. I think charter schools are a part of that choice system that means there will be new and unique choices, and that's a very critical ingredient."

In many school systems, there are so few empty seats that, while parents theoretically have choices, most of the schools they would choose don't have room for new students. In a closed market such as this, schools face very little real competition for their dollars. But if new schools are springing up all the time, creating excess capacity in the system, the competition increases dramatically. As new schools emerge, other schools shrink, losing money. When they lose enough to feel the pain, they begin making changes to win back their customers.

So why aren't there more charter schools already? At the national level, the idea has support from presidential frontrunners Al Gore and George W. Bush. Yet many state legislatures continue to stall. While there are 37 charter school laws on the books, fewer than a dozen of those laws create significant competition. As Bryan Hassel, author of *The Charter School Challenge*, explained in a recent Progressive Policy Institute brief: "Fifteen of the first 35 charter laws allow local school boards to veto applications. Fifteen make charter schools part of their local school districts, denying them legal independence. Only 17 of the laws permit full per-pupil operating funding to follow the child from a district to a charter school; fewer than five allow capital funding to follow the child. And many laws restrict the number of charter schools that can open, the types of people and organizations that can propose charter schools, or both."

Consider California, which jumped on the charter school bandwagon back in 1992 and is considered to have a fairly aggressive program. Those who want to start a charter school still have to ask the local school board for approval. If their request is denied, they can appeal to the county board of supervisors. But elected officials on school boards are often quite influential with their elected colleagues on county boards, so winning such an appeal can be hard. When Wright considered starting a charter school, he knew he couldn't get his school board to vote for it, so he talked with the president of the county board, a charter school supporter. But the board president couldn't get the votes either. So Wright created a school-within-a-school instead, which the district bureaucracy quickly neutered. California law was amended last year, and prospective charter operators can now appeal to the state Board of Education. But no one knows yet how well that will work; the board has rejected the only appeal so far. San Jose, a city of 900,000 in the heart of the hyperinnovative Silicon Valley, still awaits its first charter school.

Charter schools can create sufficient competition to force existing districts to reform, but only if the conditions are right: if there are enough charter schools, if diverse groups can create them, if they can get charters from somebody other than the local monopoly, if they take significant money away from the monopoly, and if they are free to operate independently from any district bureaucracy. In the states where all or most of these conditions exist—such as Arizona, Michigan, Massachusetts, Minnesota, North Carolina, and Texas—the competition strategy is working. Why shouldn't more states allow their own citizens the same opportunities? ■

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Sex, Etc.

EVERYTHING COSTS SOMETHING—as we all learn soon enough—but sometimes the price is a surprise. For the last forty years, the depiction of sex in films has broadened beyond anyone's foresight. (As recently as 1953, in *From Here to Eternity*, when a soldier visited a brothel, it looked like a strictly run girls' dorm, and when one of the girls agreed to go upstairs with him, she signified it by taking off an earring.) Who could regret that censorship has diminished? But who could have foreseen that one result would be boredom?

Here, for instance, is a French film called **Romance** (Trimark). Nowadays that title could only be ironical, and the irony is quickly hammered home. In Paris, Marie lives with Paul and shares his bed but of late has shared little else; he is no longer much interested in sex with her. Early in the film, attempting to persuade him otherwise, she—explicitly—fellates him. He doesn't respond. Later in the film she does it again, in the meanwhile having undergone explicit cunnilingus with a stranger, who offered her money for it, and various kinds of bondage with her boss, whose apartment is well stocked with equipment. These adventures are braided with oh-so-deep observations about her search for self and reassurance.

Romance is boring. Sex, like violence, is effective in a film when it is integrated, essential. And like violence, sex is tedious when the whole film seems an excuse to flaunt it. Outright porno films make no pretenses; they are done solely to stimulate and sometimes they succeed. The *Romance* type—and by now it is a type—have an air of bravery, but underneath there is a kind of sneakiness or a quasi-adolescent exhibitionism. ("Look at what *I* know!") The writer-director of *Romance*, Catherine Breillat, who did the tolerable *36 Fillette* and has a considerable reputation in France for work of sexual candor, has here so patently concocted a show-off picture meant to be controversial that it is blah. Often during the film, I found my mind straying, as I wondered how Breillat interviewed actors for the roles of Marie and Paul and what the screen tests were.

FOR DECADES, THEATER historians have been investigating audiences of the past, trying to determine which people went to the theater in a particular place at a particular time, what they expected, how they reacted. This kind of research has lately taken hold in film history. One of the results was an international conference on the subject in London in 1998, which was so fruitful that the British Film Institute is to publish four volumes of the papers.

The first of these, issued here by the Institute's American affiliate, Indiana University Press, is **American Film Audiences: From the Turn of the Century to the Early Sound Era**, edited by Melvyn Stokes and Richard Maltby (186 pp., hardbound $60, paperbound $24.95). Most of the ten papers are fascinating.

Judith Thissen leads off with "Jewish Immigrant Audiences in New York City, 1905-14," describing how, in that short span, those audiences went through several stages. "Between 1880 and 1914 two million East European Jews emigrated to the United States ... The majority of them disembarked in New York." They congregated in the lower East Side, and saloons soon opened for them. By 1902 the saloons began offering Yiddish vaudeville shows; then music halls were opened just for vaudeville. Then they altered: "By the end of 1907, nearly all Yiddish music halls on the East Side had been turned into moving picture theaters." But the films were from the world "outside" and didn't satisfy the communal needs of the audience, so Jewish vaudeville performers often appeared in the movie theaters while reels of the short pictures were being changed. Within two years, many of those music halls had abandoned films completely and returned to local talent. "The revival of Yiddish vaudeville," says Thissen, "can therefore ... be explained as a grass-roots resistance to the increasing influence of mainstream American culture." But this situation changed again in 1912-13, when feature-like films arrived. For economic and other reasons, the music halls began to disappear and movie palaces began to arrive. All of these changes occurred within ten years.

Giorgio Bertellini's article, called "Italian Imageries, Historical Feature Films and the Fabrication of Italy's Spectators in Early 1900s New York," comes close to justifying its weighty title. His most striking point is that Italian immigrants, mostly from the south of their homeland, found national identity in another country through films they apparently could not have seen in their native towns and villages.

> As Antonio Gramsci described it, the Italian bourgeoisie—unlike the French—had been unable and unwilling to "unite the common people" through a political and cultural sense of nationhood. Southern masses were hardly affected in their material and social lives by nationalistic traditions—at least, until they emigrated. It was only in New York that Italy's Southern population experienced an intense, albeit idealized image of their nation, as it was mediated by Italian movies.

In "Film and Ethnic Identity in Harlem, 1896-1915," Alison Griffiths and James Latham describe the rapid metamorphosis of that district and one of the factors involved. "In a relatively short time, Harlem changed from a place where African-Americans had little or no access to theatres to a place where they patronized, operated and eventually owned them ... Pre-war cinema in Harlem both responded to and molded a neighborhood that would shift from a genteel white suburb into a thriving center for African-American business and cultural life." (When my father began practicing dentistry in uptown New York in 1912, he became a member of what was then called the Harlem Dental Society. A few years later, the society changed its name.)

Other cities—Chicago and Milwaukee—and the country as a whole are discussed in other articles. One of the the most interesting is "The Revolt of the Audience: Reconsidering Audiences and Reception During the Silent Era." Here Steven J. Ross explores further one of the subjects in Kevin Brownlow's book, *Behind the Mask of Innocence*—those now-forgotten political-social films that were made in the early days. "Between 1905 and April 1917, when America entered the First World War, producers turned out 274 labor-capital films. Of the 244 films whose politics I could determine, 112 (46 per cent) were liberal, 82 (34 per cent) were conservative, 22 (9 per cent) were anti-authoritarian, 17 (7 per cent) were populist and 11 (4 per cent) were radical." After the war, the overall

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number shrank, yet there were at least 82 labor-capital films made between 1921 and 1929, the limit of the book's scope. Especially in the earlier years, most of these films were made in response to the demand of working-class audiences that their problems be treated.

Thomas Doherty investigates the effect that the arrival of sound had on audiences in "This Is Where We Came in: The Audible Screen and the Voluble Audience of Early Sound Cinema." It took some time for film audiences to mitigate "the audible expression of approval and reproach" with which they had affected live performances and which they had continued irrelevantly during silent films but which was an annoyance during sound films. Doherty also outlines the growth of viewers' sophistication. For instance, the voice-over, commonplace to us, took some getting used to. And sound altered the custom of casual arrival. Nowadays audiences generally follow the announced schedule and arrive when the showing begins, but this is a latter-day custom. (I can remember arriving—often—in the middle of a picture and trying to figure out the beginning as I watched the end, then watching the beginning to see how well I had figured it.) Says Doherty: "The audible screen rewrote the terms of motion picture spectatorship and recast the experience of movie-going."

This volume whets the appetite for the three volumes to come. And this first book underscores a paradox: how close and how remote are the oldest events in film history.

Apropos of historical change: commenting a few weeks ago on Godfrey Cheshire's important article, "The Death of Film/The Decay of Cinema," I said that the subjects he treated—digital film-making and the TV transmission of films to theaters—had previously been reported only sketchily. I meant, of course, in the general press, not technical journals, but even so I omitted mention of Walter Murch's piece in the May 2 issue of the *New York Times*. Anything that Murch (a preeminent film editor) says in this field is worth attention, and I should have cited his article. ■

Robert Brustein on Theater

Ways to Please an Audience

OVER ELEVEN DAYS in August, the village of Vevey in French-speaking Switzerland staged the **Fête des Vignerons**, attracting 17,000 spectators to each of its thirteen performances. An ancient gala, dating from just after the French Revolution, the Fête is devoted to commemorating the artistry and dedication of the local winegrowers. Indeed, it traditionally begins with the coronation of the most productive of their number as King of the Festival, elected to preside over the theatrical events with all the authority of a hereditary royal.

This was the fifth time the Festival had been produced in this century (it is staged every twenty-two years or so), and the performance was by far the most ambitious undertaking of its kind. It featured (dressed in a dazzling array of costumes by Catherine Zuber) over 4500 actors, singers, dancers, and musicians, almost all of them amateurs recruited from among the local villagers. Featured also were three hundred and fifty village children, two hundred head of cattle, six muscular oxen (bred especially for the event), three hundred sheep (their fleece dyed deep blue), numberless goats, ducks, and geese, and five helicopters which soared over the stage during a mock battle scene to the accompaniment of dazzling pyrotechnics.

In addition to sponsoring this epic event, Vevey is notable for having been the home of Charlie Chaplin and his family during the last decades of his life. You can understand why he chose to live in exile there after his troubles with a Red-baiting Congress. It is a serenely lovely town situated on Lake Leman (Lake Geneva) and surrounded by the Swiss Alps on the North and the French Alps on the South. The combination of shimmering water and majestic mountains, not to mention the surrounding village architecture, served as an enchanting scenic background for the theatrical proceedings, helping to create a kind of spatial homogeneity and cultural timelessness. Watching the event, one felt embraced by nature, history, and tradition. Even a foreigner like myself could be caught up in a powerful sense of community.

The Festival cost over fifty million francs to produce (roughly thirty-seven million dollars), most of it raised through private subscription. Expressly for the event, the noted scenographer Jean-Claude Maret constructed an immense stage in the town square. About a quarter of a mile long and 500 feet wide, it sloped up towards the lake and mountains like a scoop, at the back of which panels descended from time to time to mark the passage of the four seasons. To begin the performance, enacting a scenario written by the poet Francois Deblüe, fifty halberded soldiers on horseback trotted onto this vast empty space, followed by a hundred Swiss Guards dressed in red and carrying pikes, then a chorus of young girls on bicycles wearing pink wigs and tutus, and eventually almost every inhabitant of the surrounding neighborhood—all to the accompaniment of a rousing brass band.

This parade was followed by a *tableau vivant* representing the village of Vevey through the ages—as personified by clusters of people buying goods at a market, dressed in the costumes of three centuries. Before long appeared the clownish master of ceremonies—a variation on Harlequin renamed (with a nod to the winegrowers) Arlevin. He, in turn, introduced a variety of legendary figures traditionally featured in the Festival. These included characters both from Christian and Classical legend: Saint Martin giving half his cloak to a beggar; Orpheus appearing atop a mammoth turtle; Ceres, expressing outrage over the marriage of her daughter Proserpine to Hades (and dooming humankind to three winter months in revenge); Dionysus, cavorting with his companion Silenus, before marshalling first a group of Maenads in green wigs and grey armored bathing suits, then an army of Bacchantes, who turned the tables on the men (to the delight of the women in the audience) by taking the sexual initiative.

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The blending of Greek and Roman mythology with Christian allusions was probably a cultural memory of the French Revolution and its endorsement of classical traditions. But it was also the trademark style of the Festival's head, the notable opera and stage director François Rochaix (who, I should add, is also my colleague at the ART Institute for Advanced Theatre Training, where he serves as Director). Rochaix has always preferred to span the centuries in his productions, using a mixture of acting and costume styles. For the same purpose, he appointed three different composers—Jean-François Bovard, Michel Hostetter, and Jost Meier—to create both traditional and modern music (exquisitely played by members of the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande). The first two composed charming brass melodies and tone poems for female voices resembling those of Berlioz in his haunting *Demoiselle Elue*. These musical contributions were received without significant controversy. But Jost Meier's dissonant rendering of the popular anthem of the region, the "Ranz de Vache," though performed to the accompaniment of the usual alphorns, was the source of great contentiousness in the press and among the public.

The "Ranz de Vache" is to Swiss winegrowers and cowherds what "The Star Spangled Banner" is to patriotic Americans. Napoleon banned it because it made his Swiss militia homesick for the mountains, and tempted them to desert. The atonal treatment of the song by Meier, though he is among the most respected of modern European composers, turned into the Festival's major scandal, demonstrating how wide remains the gulf between traditional and modern tastes.

Still, this Fête des Vignerons was a huge popular success, making Rochaix temporarily the most admired figure in Switzerland. Street names were changed in his honor, and a life-size statue of the man, a bird on his shoulders and his arm extended as if giving a stage direction, presided over the lobby of the Hôtel de Trois Couronnes for weeks. At the final curtain call, it was obvious what an immense feat of artistry and administration had been achieved with this event, how it gave new meaning to the word "spectacular." Carrying the flags of all the wine regions, the colossal cast of adults, children, animals, and machines filled the cavernous stage to overflowing, as Arlevin brought a child forward to proclaim the Festival's theme: "amour et joie."

The Fête des Vignerons was a striking example of the contrast between popular and mass culture, in the sense that the former is defined by active participation and the latter by passive consumption. The capacity of so many people to direct their energies for so long toward a single common goal was the achievement of an extremely healthy civilization. I couldn't help comparing the orderly behavior of the army of participants, celebrants, and audiences at Vevey with the reported conduct of the drug-soaked mobs at the most recent Woodstock concert. In one place, rape and looting; in the other, "amour et joie." The Fête des Vignerons was an encouraging demonstration of how huge crowds of people are perfectly capable of banding together for purposes other than stampede, pandemonium, or riot.

Clearly, there is a significant difference between a people determined to affirm a proud heritage and those seeking transport through musical and pharmaceutical opiates. I returned from Switzerland to find the front page of the *Times* Arts and Leisure section dominated by two long encomiums to what was proudly called our "Hip-Hop Nation." Apparently, our national character is now being defined by the weekly record charts. Reading these articles left me profoundly demoralized. This music strikes the ear of an old jazz musician like me as tuneless, misogynistic, homophobic, and occasionally racist. Those decrying "Eurocentric" culture as imperialist and class-conscious could find much useful instruction in the way the village of Vevey succeeded in creating a mass communal event celebrating the dignity and skill of an ancient breed of worker, who still toils in the vineyards.

In the same month, the Williamstown Theatre produced a version of **As You Like It**, staged by the new director of New York's Classic Stage Company, Barry Edelstein, and featuring Gwyneth Paltrow as Rosalind. I went for the same reason everybody else did, to see whether Paltrow could handle a major Shakespearean role.

Paltrow did not disappoint my expectations, though the production did a little. Having played both Romeo and Juliet in *Shakespeare in Love*, and having been shipwrecked on a strand at the end of that movie, presumably in preparation for playing Viola, she performed Shakespeare's other major trouser-role at Williamstown with the same authority, grace, and luminosity she displayed in the film. Paltrow's Rosalind first appears at court in a strapless red gown at the side of her friend Celia (played charmingly by Megan Dodds) who is costumed in green. Paltrow may be ravishing in a dress, but she is even more appealing in pants. Instead of bedecking her uncommon fine-boned beauty with a mustache and goatee, as she did in *Shakespeare in Love*, Paltrow plays the trousers part as an ungainly youth in knickers and spectacles, his peaked cap worn backward on the head, like an aw-shucks version of Huckleberry Finn or Penrod. Occasionally she gets a little shrill, as if she hasn't quite measured properly the dimensions of the theater. But when she lowers her voice to that of an adolescent boy, she finds the perfect pitch of the part.

Paltrow makes her instruction of Orlando in the arts of love an act of sheer bravado. When he offers to leave her side for two hours, she demonstrates a capacity for heartbreak. Although Paltrow has the chops to show how many fathoms deep she is in love, she is no suffering Juliet. She can modify her feeling for Orlando with a charming skepticism about the relationship between passion and survival. ("Men have died from time to time, and worms have eaten them, but not for love.")

Only Mark Linn-Baker, playing Touchstone, is her equal in the cast. Dreadfully costumed as a 1940s pimp, he has the good sense to underplay his part when all around are overplaying theirs. He has a comic interlude with a model of a sheep on wheels that is sheer Chaplin, though he is required to repeat the gag at least two more times. And he is the only one in the cast capable of singing, rather than belting out, the Shakespearean songs. The others tend to treat them like nightclub showstoppers or cabaret numbers.

A jazz band sits on stage to help punch out the musical accompaniment. It's a good band, thoroughly out of place in the Forest of Arden. So is the setting, which makes this sylvan paradise look more like an overdecorated bordello. And since the good Duke, played by Byron Jennings (who plays the bad duke as well) is stylishly dressed in riding boots and jodhpurs, we get little sense that he and his court are in exile, eking out a precarious existence with limited resources.

Edelstein is badly served by his designers, and he has made some odd casting choices as well. Michael Cumpsty is an accomplished classical actor, but to play Jacques like a swashbuckling soldier is to ignore the central quality of the character, which is his jaundiced disposition. Likewise, the various female rustics perform as if they've just emerged from the dressing room of a Broadway musical or a downtown discotheque. Shaw once observed that the title of *As You Like It* was Shakespeare's way of admitting that he had sold out to the audience, and much of this production seems designed to confirm that insight. But Gwyneth Paltrow is the real crowd-pleaser—not because she tries to perform Shakespeare without tears, but because she has the ability to play her role with humor, imagination, and a refreshing devotion to authorial intention. ■

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Mindy Aloff on Dance

The Waking Beauty

I.

AT CARNEGIE HALL last November, the Kirov Orchestra of the Maryinsky Theater, under the baton of Valery Gergiev (since 1996, the director of the Maryinsky, where he oversees the Kirov Opera and the Kirov Ballet), gave what was probably a once-in-a-lifetime chance to hear, as a concert offering, the complete score of *The Nutcracker*. From my own experience of having listened to Tchaikovsky's ballet score hundreds of times in the ballet theater and on records, with dozens of orchestras and conductors, I can testify that the Carnegie Hall performance was the most imaginative, the most stirring, and the most undanceable presentation of *The Nutcracker* that I have ever encountered.

The storied first act was lavished with an attention to musical texture and dramatic shape that is more frequently accorded, say, to the tone poems of Richard Strauss. The dance for the toy soldier at the Christmas party, a minor entertainment in most stagings, was a major musical event here. The entrance for the grandparents became a great battlefield hymn. The passage for the growth of the Christmas tree in Marie's dream could have served for the launch of a manned mission to Mars. And the Waltz of the Snowflakes was practically symphonic, so seductive in its rhythmic advances and so various in its musical incident that it seemed we were being translated not into the softened retelling for children, by Alexandre Dumas *père*, of a tale by E.T.A. Hoffmann, which served as the basis for *The Nutcracker*'s libretto in 1892, or even into the Hoffmann story itself, but into a scene from Tolstoy, where you can almost assign a weight to the falling snow and count the birches from your sleigh.

The theatrical fantasy invoked by the music alone was monumental and self-contained: in a word, heroic. At intermission, some irate theatergoers left, protesting that "there weren't any dancers" (a little puzzling, since the publicity for the concert had noted that there wouldn't be); but dancers would have added nothing. Indeed, they would have been at a great disadvantage, since the very musical gestures that made this concert an auditory treat, beginning with the emphases that seemed to well up from the emotive depths of the score rather than from the libretto, were precisely what would have made it frustrating for dancers to follow. Those concertgoers who returned for the Act II divertissement, each miniature presented as a crown jewel, were reluctant to let the musicians leave the stage, even after several encores. It brought home to a dancegoer just how little ballet audiences pay attention to music when dancers are present, and what gifts of character and compromise a serious ballet conductor must possess in a situation where several arts advance valid, competing claims.

Gergiev is the most charismatic and persuasive partisan that Russian music has enjoyed in decades, and it is evident that the source of his strength is his devotion to the music's own internal cues to accent and meaning. In a concert situation, where this devotion can be exclusively pursued, his effect can be flabbergasting. As the overall director for one of the world's leading institutions of opera and ballet, though, he has the responsibility to look beyond the podium and the score to the proscenium, where singers, dancers, and designers of scenery, costumes, and lighting build a parallel universe, whose major purpose is to mesh with the orchestra, so that the effects of one cannot be distinguished from the impetus of all.

Given Gergiev's titanic musical energies, it is unlikely that the Kirov will ever permit music to be less than first among equals, though his vision of the stage does seem to be widening. The New York audience first became aware of it in 1994, when he made his Metropolitan Opera debut conducting *Otello*. In 1995, as the artistic director and principal conductor of the Kirov Opera (a post that he had held since 1988), he brought the company to the Brooklyn Academy of Music with a repertory of one work—a wildly received production of Rimsky-Korsakov's rarely performed *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh*, in which the singers more or less just faced the house statically and sang. (In 1997, he was appointed the Met's first-ever principal guest conductor.)

At the Met in 1998, the Kirov Opera returned with four more Russian works, by Glinka, Prokofiev, Borodin, and Tchaikovsky. In the two performances that I attended, the triumphs were emphatically musical, though dancing was featured center stage when called for, and the staging of the singers in Prokofiev's *Betrothal in a Monastery* actually served to clarify the plot. In Borodin's *Prince Igor*, which I missed, the choreography for the second-act dances was a representation of what Michel Fokine had arranged for Diaghilev, who presented the second act as a free-standing excerpt. This would be an unusual effort by any opera company now, not only because Fokine's ballets have unaccountably disappeared from repertory, but also because opera companies are not typically committed to treating opera ballets as historical artifacts.

One or two European ballet companies have performed Fokine's dances from *Prince Igor* in New York in recent memory; whatever choreography has survived is there to be had. But the Kirov went beyond that, including them in a full-length opera production, which even Diaghilev didn't do. It seemed a mark of respect for ballet that few people in the States expected from Gergiev, whose reputation here was that he had little use for anything as annoying as dance, a nuisance of an art, whose basic requirement of consistent tempi was fundamentally at odds with musical rhetoric, and flattened out the effects that musicians work so hard to put over.

THIS PAST SUMMER, Gergiev offered another ballet surprise: two weeks at the Met by the Kirov Ballet, which, for some four years, has been more or less directed by Makhar Vaziev, a dancer from the company who took over the job officially in 1997 and who, at the age of 38, may be the youngest artistic director in the company's history, as Lewis Segal pointed out in a revealing interview with him in the *Los Angeles Times*. Owing to the rather opaque circumstances (including criminal allegations), that surrounded the disempowerment in the mid-1990s of the Ballet's previous director, Oleg Vinogradov, after a tenure of eighteen years that seemed to have led the company into artistic decline, observers in Europe and elsewhere had resigned themselves to the inevitable. Like Britain's Royal Ballet, now in disarray, and the Royal Danish Ballet, which has been withering on the vine for one decade if not two, the Kirov seemed to have lost its position as a leading aesthetic force, providing one more sad example of the proposition that classical ballet is dying out in our time.

Yet the Met appearance turned out to be alive with high expectations. The centerpiece was a lavish new production,

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employing over one hundred dancers, of *The Sleeping Beauty*, whose sets and costumes drew on designs and preserved examples from the original production in 1890, and whose staging, by principal Kirov dancer Sergei Vikharev, is based on extensive notations of Marius Petipa's choreography and elaborate staging, now in the Harvard Theater Collection, as well as on Vikharev's comparative checking of them against other productions in Russia and Europe. Dance critics have been helpful to this ambitious and vigorous attempt at reanimation. The person who deserves credit for bringing those notations to the Kirov's attention is Tim Scholl, an American dance critic and historian; and, as Elizabeth Kendall explained in *Playbill*, the Russian critic Pavel Gershanson served as Vaziev's assistant "turned ad hoc producer."

The rest of the Kirov's New York programming also suggested international input from critical voices: An all-Balanchine evening (*Serenade*, *Apollo*, *Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux*, *Symphony in C*); the Kirov's hallmark Petipa-inflected production of *Giselle*, complete with Wilis flown across the width of the Met stage; and the New York premiere of a long-lived curiosity from the Stalin era, Rostislav Zakharov's *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*. This work was given its premiere in 1934 and was in fact Stalin's favorite ballet. The libretto, based on Pushkin, tells a bleak tale of young love destroyed (the hero is killed before intermission) and of a love triangle that leads to the deaths of two female characters, one through murder, the other through suicide. It is known in the West through excerpts in Russian dance films, and it is considered important here primarily as a vehicle for indelible performances by Galina Ulanova and Maya Plisetskaya in the ballerina roles.

STILL, THIS PROGRAMMING would be impossible without company hopes and labors going back decades. In 1983, when I visited St. Petersburg on a trip with a contingent of American dance writers, Vinogradov spoke of plans for a new production of *The Sleeping Beauty* to replace the current one from 1952, when Konstantin Sergeyev, with help from Fedor Lopukhov, radically reconfigured the production then in repertory, turning the remnants of what had survived from a revival following the revolution in 1917 into a mimeless, dance-driven spectacle. When the Kirov performed at the Met in 1989, however, it brought the 1952 version, virtually unchanged. The company's first Balanchine ballets were also acquired by Vinogradov: *Theme and Variations* (staged by Francia Russell) and *Scotch Symphony* (staged by Suzanne Farrell). Kirov dancers continued to perform Balanchine in the 1990s; early in this decade, in Washington, D.C., I saw an unusual rendering of *Apollo* (staged by Patricia Neary), with Altynai Asylmouratova as an unforgettable Terpsichore and Konstantin Zaklinsky in the title role, wearing heeled shoes in the manner of the Sun King of France, to whose musical era Stravinsky paid homage in the score. Nor are the Kirov and the Bolshoi the first Russian companies to dance Balanchine. That honor goes to a ballet company in Tblisi, in Soviet Georgia, where Balanchine was born; it was dancing *Serenade* in the 1980s.

ALL THIS TO one side, the Maryinsky under Gergiev's directorship seems to be a different breed of cat. Consider the Ballet's historical Russian programming. As the Kirov's recent Theater Annual makes crystal clear, it is part of a larger campaign to overhaul the theater as a whole and thereby to keep it going during mean economic times. The historical attitude that sought to restore *The Sleeping Beauty* to something that approaches its original condition, yet retains the 1952 production alongside it in repertory, belongs to the herculean spirit that are also being applied to the Opera, which, among other things, has just mounted a reconstruction of the original 1862 St. Petersburg production of Verdi's *La forza del destino* (Gergiev links it to the Opera's plans to celebrate the centennial of Verdi's death); and the presentation of *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* reflects a new temper toward the Soviet past, admitting it as a strain of the country's identity, as in a new production of Prokofiev's *Semyon Kotko*, which was written to order in 1940 on the subject of a Soviet Realist novel.

The productions and the festivals on the Maryinsky drawing board are so ambitious that Gergiev himself calls them "grandiose." Where is the money coming from? According to the Theater Annual, from the entire world. In 1993, Gergiev founded an organization called Friends of the Kirov Opera, and its current list of sponsors contains the names of individuals and corporations from across Europe. Meanwhile, the Maryinsky Global Advisory Board is taken up with the health of the entire theater—opera, ballet, and orchestra. Its patron is the Prince of Wales, who accepted the Russian sinecure at a time when ballet in Britain is nearly destitute. (The Royal Academy of Dancing, the oldest British institution devoted to ballet, has just decided to sell its core collection of exceedingly rare dance books—including one of only five known copies of a program for the *Ballet Comique de la Reine* from 1581, the oldest ballet on record—in order to pay for scholarships and to digitalize the rest of its library.)

Patrons of the arts internationally these days are few; ballet and opera cost a fortune; and nationalism no longer seems to be a priority in their thinking. This is a turn of events that no one has ever seen before, and the repercussions of this globalization for ballet are major. Although the art has always thrived on the cross-fertilization that is the happy result of the miseries of exile and emigration of individual artists, its great centers have been associated with specific nations, in terms of their personnel, audiences, and support. Now everything is up for reassessment.

It may well be that in returning to "originals," especially in its Russian repertory, the Kirov is actually pressing forward as an empire without borders. Whether this is a "good" thing or a "bad" thing is beside the point. The institution is trying to save its life as an elite artistic enterprise in a country so wracked by economic confusion and the predations of the greedy that art seems almost as frivolous a concern as it did during the Revolution.

II.

HOW WELL IS the Kirov doing at being elite? At the Met, not well at all. It was much too popular. Four principal casts were presented in *The Sleeping Beauty*; I saw all of them. The Balanchine evening was presented twice, with different casts in all but one ballet; I saw both evenings. Of the handful of casts in *Giselle*, I saw two; of the three casts in *Fountain*, I saw one. On the basis of nine performances out of sixteen, then, I can report that as far as audiences were concerned, over half the season, at least, was a rousing success with crowds that, for the Balanchine programs, filled the four thousand-seat house.

Most astonishing were the warm receptions accorded *The Sleeping Beauty*, which has a running time that approaches four hours. Night after night, the audiences had to be prodded to leave the theater. During the performances, their collective concentration only seemed to flag during the third act, a formal wedding divertissement without a narrative incentive to keep the occasional balletgoer (and occasional balletgoers made up most of these audiences) stimulated. Now, by the third act of most productions of this work that I have seen at the Met in the past thirty years, the theater would begin to empty. What kept people in place past the point of pure enchantment?

The visual spectacle was astonishing and ingratiating, like an Arts-and-Crafts illustrated children's book come to life; but

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the magnet was the music. I have heard Tchaikovsky's score played with more delicacy and with much more accommodation to the dancers, yet never with more passion, imagination, and commitment. It was like this from the first chords of galloping thunder in the overture to the majestically composed apotheosis, spreading a song without words across the theater like a canopy. At all four performances, the show-stopping moment was also musical: the "Entr'acte," containing a featured violin part, performed by the coprincipal violinist Alexander Vasiliev, who played from the pit while the curtain was closed. The staging of Vasiliev's performances at the Met appears to be unique in the ballet's production history.

When the Kirov dances *The Sleeping Beauty* at most other theaters, the curtain is open, and audiences see a "Panorama"—a scene showing the Lilac Fairy and Prince Désiré voyaging toward the castle of the sleeping Aurora in the fairy's boat. At the Met, the Kirov announced, unrolling scenery for the "Panorama" wouldn't fit. The quick fix of a pure recital riveted the house every time. Invariably, the audience would register some uncertainty that there was nothing to see on stage, then quiet down, listen, and hold its breath for a beat after the final, soaring note before breaking into tumultuous applause.

THE WHOLE THING was an irony of historical proportions. Violin solos were part of ballet convention in nineteenth-century Russia. In Tchaikovsky's time, the court violinist who played them at the Imperial Theater was the Hungarian virtuoso and teacher Leopold Auer, who emigrated to New York in 1918, where he is still fondly recalled as the teacher of Jascha Heifetz, Mischa Elman, Efrem Zimbalist, and others. In *The Sleeping Beauty*, Tchaikovsky wrote a sinuous and grateful part for Auer, so songlike in character that it might almost be called vocalise.

But then, one week before the ballet's world premiere, the composer received a telegram ordering him to delete it from Ivan Vsevolozhsky, the director of Imperial Theaters, who not only co-authored the ballet's libretto and designed its array of fantastical and luxurious costumes, but also conceived the project itself in the first place, bringing Petipa and Tchaikovsky together as collaborators for the first time. Even in a more leisurely era, it seems, the length of the piece was a reason for worry; and so the solo was dispensible, since it did not advance the action.

In Diaghilev's landmark production in 1921, the violin solo was also deleted (along with much else, apparently), out of the same concern. Balanchine included it in his production of *The Nutcracker* in 1954, where it serves what is perhaps the most tender and intimate moment of the first Act, where Marie's mother, finding Marie asleep with the injured Nutcracker on the drawing-room sofa, takes off her own shawl and throws it over the child rather than awakening her. And now, after a century of exile from its intended setting, this "Entr'acte" returned in its full spotlighted glory in New York.

It proved to be so powerful on its own terms that the Kirov musicians were as stunned as the Met audiences. At the conclusion of each rendition of it, the conductor—Gianandrea Noseda, a native of Milan, who was appointed by Gergiev in 1997 as the Maryinsky's principal guest conductor—gave Vasiliev a bear hug. Even Noseda seemed unable quite to believe that when Tchaikovsky speaks directly to an audience, without distraction, in a good performance, the audience will pay attention and be deeply moved—that even within Tchaikovsky's ballets, one can take away the dancers and still have a spellbinding theatrical poetry. In some way, Tchaikovsky had finally won with the public at large. It was one of those events when the world giddily turns upside-down and one's thinking about what is possible changes forevermore, like the Mets winning the World Series in 1969.

The production was replete with visual sensations, too. The sets and the costumes exploded with riotous colors, impossibly detailed sets (including a working fountain), costumes and props of such fantasy that they seem to have leaped off a deck of Tarot cards, and three completely stocked courts, all flourishing at the same time in the same space—that of Aurora's parents, King Florestan XIV and his Queen; of the beneficent Lilac Fairy; and of the Evil Fairy, Carabosse. What this may tell us about the actual court of Czar Nicholas II, from whose time Sergeyev's notes survive, is no child's story (this new *Beauty* does not give us the undocumented choreography of 1890, when Alexander III was czar, but rather its condition when Nicholas had been in power for nearly a decade).

The vanquishing of Carabosse may have had implications for the ballet's early audiences that have evaporated with time and with the reduction of Petipa's dance forces in most subsequent productions. Those shifting masses not only create much more complex visual patterns than ever before, they also specify the aristocratic nature of the entire milieu, of which the dancing and the drama are elements, threads in a larger ceremonial entity. Of all the mime restorations, the most powerful by far is that of the Shakespearean dumbshow monologue for King Florestan in Act I, as he debates with himself whether to have a group of village women executed for possessing spinning needles, which had been banned from the kingdom under pain of death following Carabosse's prediction that Aurora would grow up to prick her finger on one and die. Should he carry out his harsh edict on this, of all days, Aurora's sixteenth birthday?

It is quite a wrenching moment for this fairytale, and the mime Vladimir Ponomarev performed it with the understatement of Gielgud's Hamlet. Eventually, the Queen's gentle pleas convince the King to relent. One could not help thinking of the recent exhibition of books and other documents relating to Nicholas and Alexandra that were on exhibition last year at the New York Public Library: the relationship of the Czar and the Czarina, as expressed in letters between them, is quite close to that between the King and Queen in the

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Act II, "The Sleeping Beauty," Maryinsky Theater, St. Petersburg, 1890

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ballet—the ruminative Nicholas, who wanted to be an artist and was forced to be a czar, dependent on Alexandra, with whom he appears to have created a domestic life that permitted him escape from the political responsibilities for which he had little appetite. One can see why this mime scene would be excised for several reasons in a Soviet production (and, since it doesn't advance the narrative directly, in a commercially-minded Western one).

The amazing thing was to see what it added to the work's great self-reflecting theme of a ballet about the invention, the misfortune, and the renascence of ballet itself. The exultant "Garland Waltz" for a battalion of villagers, including some fifty small children, which follows the mime scene, and the "Rose Adagio" for Aurora and her suitors, which follows the Waltz, acquire a new theatrical depth and necessity, with the Waltz lightening the mood and the Adagio irradiating it, so that when the Act arrives at its dramatic climax—when Aurora does, in fact, prick her finger on a needle and falls senseless—the entire world of the ballet contracts to the network of symbols established by the unavoidable connection between needles and point shoes. In sum, when the ballerina has fallen from the heights of her raised points, the kingdom is sent into shock; and the rest of the ballet will be consigned to reestablishing her authority, and, with the Act III divertissement, to celebrating it.

IN TERMS OF particular dances in this *Sleeping Beauty*, the adagios and variations that here represent Petipa have either been preserved in other productions or do not seem individually more wonderful than some of the replacements devised since by Lopukhov, Ashton, and others; but together they comprise an amazing dance architecture, full of visual rhymes and resonances in the way that steps are presented and timed. By the end, when Aurora and the Prince simply walk upstage toward the scenic vision of Apollo the charioteer, one feels something along the lines of a master builder inscribing his initials on a cornerstone. Just as a typical Petipa variation tends to grow mathematically by integers—now one pirouette, now two—the overarching structure of his choreography here accumulates patiently and steadily over an evening. The heart of his style is clarity and exactness. When he complicates elements, he does so in a way that is always comprehensible to the eye and appealing to the mind. That is why every detail matters, and why every decision involved in producing Petipa's work makes a difference.

The Aurora who understood this throughout was Asylmouratova, the most senior of the four. Since the last time she performed the role here, in 1989, in the Sergeyev production, her athletic abilities have diminished; but this summer she was unparalleled. Even ten years ago, Aurora was not her ideal showcase, because there are no tragic notes. Still, she conveys the Petipa style fully, giving distinct rhythmic values to the individual movement of her head and hands, timing a double pirouette with the working leg stretched in second position so that she seems to turn like a turret around her own spine, or dancing an allegro combination while maintaining a quiet physical center, thereby supplying a satisfying kinesthetic contrast to the hyperactive coloratura of an accompanying violin.

ASYLMOURATOVA PERFORMED during a Wednesday matinee—that is, shunted to the perimeter of the casting map, like Irma Nioradze, the second-senior Aurora, a last-minute replacement, although, after a shaky start, an interesting one. (Nioradze actually resembles photographs of Carlotta Brianza, Petipa's original Aurora.) The featured Auroras—first-cast Svetlana Zakharova and second-cast Diana Vishneva—come from another generation of ballerinas whose advancement is associated with Vaziev. Vishneva, who can be dazzling in allegro work, is the stronger and more dependable in most technical areas, but she is also a colder stage personality. In the run of *Giselle*, where, on the first two nights, the casting of these dancers in the title role was reversed, Zakharova created a persuasive tragic heroine, while Vishneva impersonated one. Zakharova can be a goddess as a dancer in some ways: her breathtaking elevation and the plangent rondure of her port de bras were spectacularly beautiful in Balanchine's *Serenade*. Yet her strengths seem to be linked to weaknesses that, to some extent, are shared by all the principals and the soloists we saw of her generation: gymnastic extensions of the leg seem to be invariably tied to unpredictable balance in multiple pirouettes; fabulous aerial work seems to be linked with mechanically performed or slurred petit allegro technique.

The role of Aurora, unhappily for this generation, was made to show perfection in all technical areas. What does one do with ballerinas whose physicality and training incorporate not only a century of science that was unavailable to Petipa, but also changes of emphasis in training that produce deficiencies in some of the very technical particulars on which he put his greatest emphases? There is no doubt that if he were in the studio today, Petipa would be taking advantage of the dancers' freakishly brilliant lines while goading them toward refinements in small jumps and transition steps. Absent Petipa, however, reconstructors of his ballet are in something of a moral jam. When, at the start of the "Rose Adagio," Zakharova flung up one leg past the overhead "six o'clock" position, in a pose where three o'clock was the hour originally posted, it was as if she had torn through a net and said, "Let's get real, this is 1999." To make her the first-cast Aurora is less a statement of the company's collective historical profile than a confession of its current limitations.

The only ballerina of this younger generation who conveyed the impression of being a fully-formed artist as well as a gifted dancer is Uliana Lopatkina. Her performances in the Balanchine evening (the Waltz girl in *Serenade*, the lead in the second movement of *Symphony in C*) show her to have a special affinity for adagio, and although one might query some of her performing decisions, there was no question that they were decisions, real choices. In this aspect, the only comparable male dancer in the Met run was Igor Zelensky, an affecting Albrecht in *Giselle* and an explosive surprise in the title role of *Apollo*, which he danced during his several years with the New York City Ballet earlier in this decade and in which, there, he looked quite ill at ease. With the Kirov, he seemed to have broken free of some sort of restriction; his account of the role had the vigor and the enthusiasm of the young Jacques d'Amboise.

III.

AS FOR THE Balanchine works, even under the best of rehearsal conditions it would be asking much of these Russian dancers—trained in such a different classical approach and routinely performing such different repertory—to absorb so much in the brief time that Francia Russell had to set *Serenade* and *Apollo*, and, in *Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux*, to rehearse Vishneva (who knew the role already) and her alternating partners.(*Symphony in C* was staged by John Taras and Patricia Neary.)

Even so, as Russell explains in an interview to be published this winter in *Ballet Review*, the rehearsal conditions were frustrating to the point of despair. The key problem seems to have been that most of the dancers had never seen the ballets that she was trying to teach them, and so they had no inkling of what made them important to learn, and, with time, to inhabit. One or two went so far as to try to change the choreography to suit their personal skills. In addition to the dancers' resistance—worn down in some cases when they had the chance to look at videotapes

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of great performances under Balanchine's living direction—was the headache of trying to schedule the rehearsals themselves. Almost no one could be counted on to appear consistently, so nearly all of Russell's time was taken up in teaching the steps anew. She never got to the way the steps should be performed in any substantial depth. Her affection for the wholehearted commitment of the various casts to the actual performances is touching, yet the thousands of refinements to technical execution and musicality that make up the Balanchine style are not things that anyone can summon up on the spot through sheer inspiration, no matter how large the raw talent or how willing the heart.

For New York dancegoers who knew the ballets well, most of the dancers looked stiff and four-square; and it is a testament to the structure and sturdiness of the ballets that they thrilled the audiences anyway. In truth, most of the dancers looked stiff and four-square in Petipa, too, for those who remembered casts from various countries in past decades. Yet Balanchine's choreography is more complex in its physical finish and in its coordination to the music, more dramatically isolated the small but unmistakable awkwardnesses.

DISSOLVE, NOW, TO jazz. About the time I was studying this new Kirov Ballet struggling to be reborn, I attended a public seminar about the dance elements in swing music, organized one summer afternoon at the Lincoln Center Plaza under the aegis of "Midsummer Night's Swing." The panel was moderated by the historian and connoisseur of jazz music and swing dancing Ernie Smith, and the panelists included the writer Albert Murray and the bandleader Illinois Jacquet, a protégé of Count Basie. In the course of two hours, the discussion zeroed in on such topics as the nature of improvisation and syncopation, the specific numbers of beats in slow, moderate, and fast dance tempi—and, most important for the Kirov's rather ticktock approach to Balanchine—the possibility of dancing to different rhythmic levels in a piece of music at different times.

Balanchine dancers have talked about this, too. Suzanne Farrell has explained that on some nights she would choose to dance to the melodic line of a score while on other nights she would dance to other orchestral lines. Of course, as a ballerina, she could make such choices spontaneously. Sometimes, though, they are built right into the ballets. In 1980, I watched Arthur Mitchell rehearse *Serenade* with the Dance Theatre of Harlem and heard him correct the ensemble for listening to the melody in a certain passage when Balanchine had wanted them at that point to hear the accompaniment.

Dissolve, now, to the State University at New Paltz. Closely following the Kirov's appearances, I visited the campus to hear the music critic and historian Harold Schonberg, whose specialty is piano playing, conduct a discussion of the leading pianists of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Schonberg brought tapes of such soloists as Ignaz Friedman, who played Chopin mazurkas with the ease of someone clarifying butter. The students were fascinated by the elegance and the liquidity of phrasing, by the allure of the sheer pianism, so exacting and yet so self-effacing that one doesn't hear it as virtuosity but rather as a sound of uncommon loveliness.

This approach to the nineteenth-century repertory—evolved through a line of teacher-performers that included Liszt—appears to have vanished from the musical world. As Schonberg explained, modernist composers, Stravinsky foremost among them, controlled the performer in their music very tightly, reducing performance choices and profoundly affecting the expectations of both performers and audiences about how music ought to sound if it is contemporary. For this reason, the almost unearthly sensuousness of an Ignaz Friedman belongs to the antique past.

Still, as two willing students in Schonberg's class showed, young pianists can be curious about how they, too, might produce such effects. In a gentle yet an uncompromising criticism, Schonberg began to give them a window on phrasing by asking them not to use the pedal so much, so as to permit more clarity in individual notes. He indicated how to vary the rhetorical eloquence in minute ways to achieve magnified effects, and he laid the seed for a way of thinking about the playing of Romantic music in general as a steady variation of texture and attack, with the object of keeping the listener's concentration fresh.

What Schonberg was proposing could not be distinguished from what the swing-dance panel had proposed for dancers and musicians. And I should like to propose that these musical lessons might apply to classical dancers as well. For such tiny details of performance and such ethereal refinements of attitude are certainly part of the texts of Balanchine ballets, and possibly of the Petipa ballets, too. Sergeyev's notations, as individuals involved with them have testified, are only the basic sketch for the building: the elements that make the ballets live require artistic decisions for which Sergeyev did not provide, because he did not feel he needed to—the notations were in his possession and he would be right there to answer questions, or, in famous instances, to wreak havoc—

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or because he was unmusical, or both.

Why should I think that it might be "historically correct," not to speak of practically helpful and aesthetically enhancing, to translate concerns of late-Romantic musical performance to ballet from the same period? My evidence is purely poetic, derived from the stage itself and, indirectly, from a memoir of a musical event that gives a clue to some of the anxieties invested in a spectacle that seeks to reawaken what dark energy has felled. Sergeyev made his notations of *The Sleeping Beauty* in 1903. During the 1903-4 musical season in St. Petersburg, the pianist Josef Hofmann and the violinist Jan Kubelik gave some concerts together, and an impression of them has been powerfully preserved in a memoir by a member of the audience, Osip Mandelstam, who attended them when he was about thirteen.

Writing in retrospect two decades later, Mandelstam's description of both the audiences and the artists seems pertinent, not only to our understanding of what *The Sleeping Beauty* may have represented to its defenders during its time, but also to what its painstaking creation of lightness in the face of willful disorder might mean for our own. "The concerts [of Hofmann and Kubelik] would reach a kind of rage, a fury," Mandelstam observed. "This was no musical dilettantism: there was something threatening and even dangerous that rose up out of enormous depths, a kind of craving for movement; a mute prehistorical malaise was exuded by the peculiar, the almost flagellant zeal of the guards in Mikhajlovskij Square, and it whetted the Petersburg of that day (the year 1905 had not yet struck) like a knife." Later in the essay, the poet speaks of the music itself:

> In what followed, these little geniuses, holding sway over the stunned musical mob of maids of honor and girl students, fat art patrons and shock-headed singing coaches, would try with all the means of their art, with all the logic and splendor of their sound, to chain and cool the unbridled Dionysian element. I have never heard from anyone such a pure, primordially clear, and transparent sound, in the piano sober as spring water, and producing in the violin a voice of the utmost simplicity, indivisible into its component filaments; and I have never again heard such a virtuoso, such an alpine cold, as in the frugality, sobriety, and formal clarity of these two legalists of the violin and the pianoforte. But what in their performance was clear and sober served only to enrage and incite to new frenzies the crowd that clung to the marble columns, hung in clusters from the gallery, sprouted from the flower-beds of the orchestra, and thickened hotly on the stage. Such was the power in the rational and pure playing of these two virtuosi.

It may well be that Alexandre Benois's famous description of falling in love with Tchaikovsky's music for *The Sleeping Beauty*—whose original run in 1890 the artist attended obsessively, from its second performance—and, through the music, of falling in love with both the rest of the ballet and the rest of Tchaikovsky's oeuvre, was not unique to Benois, but only uniquely articulated by him. If, indeed, music was the center of the culture of St. Petersburg, then the Kirov's new production of *The Sleeping Beauty* is being true to the spirit of the original—true, that is, precisely to the extent that it consigns dance to second place.

This is a troubling idea for a dance critic, and an astonishing idea to entertain in connection with this company, which for decades was famous, even notorious, for its distortion of composers' tempi in order to enhance the effects of dancers. But today it is important to insist that it is not by the music that this great work, and the other great works of the ballet tradition, will be saved. If *The Sleeping Beauty*, in this production and in others, is going to survive, it will be because the dancers wish to retain it; and because audiences wish to see it as well as to hear it. One of the great lessons of ballet history is that administrations of state theaters come and go, and so do conductors, but ballets are preserved because of the needs of the dancers. Historically—alas, for many choreographers and composers—music has rarely been among them. We would all benefit if Valery Gergiev could somehow get the dancers of the Kirov to cherish what they hear as much as what they do. But lashing them into line is not the solution. ■

The Broken Mirror

By ANDREW DELBANCO

American Sermons: The Pilgrims to Martin Luther King Jr. edited by Michael Warner

(Library of America, 939 pp., $40)

"Anything is not truth," John Jay Chapman once wrote to William James, "till it is so strongly believed in that the believer is convinced that its existence does not depend on him." Here, in a sentence, is the dilemma of religion in the modern world: the diminished possibility of grounding belief in some bedrock truth that exists apart from the human believer—a truth that must be discovered rather than constructed, found rather than made.

Since the Enlightenment, the odds in favor of establishing transcendent truth have been dropping in proportion to the proliferation of verifiable truths about the material world. There had been intimations of a break between religious belief and secular knowledge at least since the Renaissance; but it was not until the mid-nineteenth century that intellectuals repudiated the idea, as the Unitarian minister William Ellery Channing put it some thirty years before Darwin, that "creation is a birth and shining forth of the Divine Mind."

Dissent from this idea of nature animated by spirit found vigorous expression in Ludwig Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity* (which was introduced to English-speaking readers in 1854 in George Eliot's translation)—a scandal to the churches, a manifesto for freethinkers. It declared that "religion is the childlike condition of humanity," credible only to human beings who have not reached full self-awareness. God himself was revealed to be nothing more or less than "the manifest inward nature, the expressed self of a man," merely the objectification of human ideas and feelings. Through the advocacy of New Englanders such as James Marsh and George Ticknor, preliminary versions of such advanced European ideas had already made headway in America, where, as early as 1838, Emerson was describ-

ANDREW DELBANCO's new book, *The Real American Dream: A Meditation on Hope*, has just been published by Harvard University Press.

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ing "the religious sentiment" to divinity school graduates without resorting to the word God.

But the decisive break between religion and the intellectuals came with the publication in 1859 of *The Origin of Species*, which left religion clinging to the discredited idea that the will of a creator could be discerned in nature. And when the parallel effort to discover God's will in the unfolding of history—a theme implicit in the Hebrew Bible and in Christian thought since the patristic era—collapsed under pressure from critical scholarship that showed the Bible to be a book of multiple authorship, what T.S. Eliot later called "the repudiation of revealed religion by men of culture" was at hand.

MODERNITY, IN OTHER words, brought into view the flux of nature and history—into which the religious conception of transcendent truth increasingly disappeared. This is the secret theme of the new volume of American sermons edited by Michael Warner and published by the Library of America. I say secret, because none of the preachers represented here acknowledges it as explicitly as did semi-secular writers such as Henry Adams around the turn of the century, when he wrote that "the idea of one Form, Law, Order, or Sequence had no more value" for understanding nature, and that in history he could discover only "the loosest relative truths." There is nothing in this book approaching this degree of frankness about what it means to live in a disenchanted world.

Reading through this book is therefore a somewhat hermetic experience. Rounding the bend into the twentieth century in the company of preachers whose vocabulary is not fundamentally different from that of Augustine, I found myself thinking of the great passage in Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* that follows her report, rendered in clipped newspaperese, that "twenty or thirty young men were blown up in France, among them Andrew Ramsay":

> At that season those who had gone down to pace the beach and ask of the sea and sky what message they reported or what vision they affirmed had to consider among the usual tokens of divine bounty—the sunset on the sea, the pallor of dawn, the moon rising, fishing-boats against the moon, and children making mud pies or pelting each other with handfuls of grass, something out of harmony with this jocundity and this serenity. There was the silent apparition of an ashen-coloured ship for instance, come, gone; there was a purplish stain upon the bland surface of the sea as if something had boiled and bled, invisibly, beneath. This intrusion into a scene calculated to stir the most sublime reflections and lead to the most comfortable conclusions stayed their pacing. It was difficult blandly to overlook them; to abolish their significance in the landscape; to continue, as one walked by the sea, to marvel how beauty outside mirrored beauty within ... to pace the beach was impossible; contemplation was unendurable; the mirror was broken.

IN FACT, NEWS of the broken mirror had been received in America sooner than in Europe, not least because the United States was a pioneer in the field of mechanized slaughter. In his Civil War novel, *Miss Ravenel's Conversion from Secession to Loyalty*, which appeared in 1879, John W. DeForest described how a Union soldier, sitting propped against a tree with a newspaper in hand during a lull in the fighting, was struck by a stray bullet that "cut the spinal column where it joins the brain" and left him instantly dead, "his face ... paling" as the blood drained out through the wound while he was "still holding the New York *Independent*, with his eyes fixed on a sermon by Henry Ward Beecher."

This story—the story of pulpit platitudes falling, as it were, on dead ears—is muted in *American Sermons*. Beecher is represented by a sermon ("that there will not be concussions, and perhaps some garments rolled in blood, I will not undertake to say") that was delivered, without irony, in 1861, when no one had yet imagined the coming carnage. But Warner gives us something less familiar and more interesting: a gathering *within* the American religious community of forceful figures contending with the challenge of modernity.

Like previous anthologists of sermons (there have been distinguished examples since John Wingate Thornton's *Pulpit of the American Revolution* in 1876), Warner faced some problems intrinsic to the genre. For one thing, sermons are written to be heard, not to be read. Beginning with the standard preaching manual of early New England, William Perkins's *Arte of Prophecying* (1592), it has been "received custome for preachers to speake by heart" rather than to read from a prepared text or to rely on notes. As a result, published sermons by Puritan preachers were sometimes reconstructions based on notes taken by someone who had heard them preached. Most, but not all, of Warner's selections come from editions issued in the minister's lifetime, and therefore carry some presumption of authorial approval. But the relation of hearing a sermon to reading it in print is something like the relation of hearing a piece of music to reading its score—a point that Emerson put nicely when he wrote of Channing, "He could never be reported, for his eye and voice could not be printed, and his discourses lose their best in losing them."

Against these odds, this volume manages to convey a vivid variety of pulpit voices. We have the cerebral professor Paul Tillich, the slangy baseball-player-turned evangelist Billy Sunday ("Go to that widow and tell her it was a geological necessity for her husband to croak ... where does that scientific junk lift the burden from her heart?"), and the folksy C.L. Franklin, son of a sharecropper and father of Aretha Franklin, who chants his sermons to a rhythm of call-and-response:

> My soul,
> My soul,
> my soul
> is caged in,
> in this old body,
> yes it is,
> and one of these days
> the man who made the cage
> will open the door
> and let my soul
> go.
> Yes he will.

THE RANGE OF idioms notwithstanding, it is not too distorting, I think, to say that what we have here are essentially two parties—liberals (mostly Protestant ministers, but also a sprinkling of Catholics and Jews), and, for lack of a better term, fundamentalists. To the liberals, disputes that once dominated the pulpit (the heritability of sin, the efficacy of sacraments such as baptism and communion, the typological meaning of scriptural prophecies) look like childish quarrels, vestiges of an immature phase of human development when fear and hope were lodged in dogma, sacred symbols, and institutions claiming divine origin. To credit the authority of such ephemera seems, to liberals, a surrender to superstition. Liberals have a tendency to latitudinarianism—an inclination to stress the points where different religious traditions merge rather than the boundaries of ritual and doctrine that separate them. Liberals are friendly toward secular expressions of the human mind, as when Channing, using the verb advisedly, speaks of "the delight ministered to us by works of fiction or of imaginative art." Emerson speaks for liberalism when he says, "To adhere to one form a moment after it is outgrown is foolish."

Fundamentalists, by contrast, tend to regard knowledge as something received, as a blessing revealed in unrevisable form at certain sacred moments designated by

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Bach

for Peter Flanders

Through an upstairs window, the afternoon sun
catches the honeyed curve of a cello's scroll.
Outside, it's as if a limousine
had nosed to a halt deep in a saffron shoal

of daylilies, the way they shiver so
against the chrome bumper of an absence.
I want to know where that dark car's getting to.
Grandpa plays Bach. The lovely involutions

lead nowhere, though: music refers to music.
The freckled flowers and slant beam are not altered,
not by this. He stops. Silence starts to tick,
and day moves slowly past its own heated

smell. His twin jam jars gleam, water and bourbon.
A door slams, and ambition's transit now,
to which the self has given its inflection,
slopes to its puzzled rest, to its *dal segno*.

Karl Kirchwey

God. These moments—the creation, the incarnation (for Christians), and the yet-to-come fulfillment of messianic prophecies—are recorded or prophesied in Scripture, where they may be concealed in esoteric or typological codes that, if deciphered by a competent interpreter, correlate with the outward events of post-biblical history. The word of God illuminates all and is available to all; but the saving knowledge that it imparts is vouchsafed only to those whom God chooses.

Within the fundamentalist tradition, to be sure, there has been bitter disagreement over how few or how many belong to the chosen, and disagreement, too, over how much human beings can do to hasten or to secure their own salvation. But all fundamentalists agree that without God's intervention in history and in the lives of individuals, there can be no truth, no consolation, and no hope. The true believer does not trust himself, as the Puritan John Cotton put it, "to thinke a good thought ... *he can doe nothing* ... unlesse Christ assist him, and help him at every turne."

These opposed ways of looking at the world sometimes appear to line up neatly with class distinctions. To people with property and power, the relaxed abstractions of liberalism have seemed congenial. Fundamentalism, with its promise of redemption, seems to offer comfort to those who feel remote from or threatened by power, and who live without much sense of control over their lives. Yet one of the services of Warner's anthology is to show that these alignments of religious style and worldly standing have rarely been so simple.

In the seventeenth century, for instance, the party of latitude and sophistication in old England was, as one might expect, on the side of aristocracy and established church authority. But the stirrings of modernity—psychological self-interrogation, a strong commitment to literacy, rationality, science, and the dignity of women—were more to be found among those whom contemporaries thought of as fundamentalists. Owing to their uncompromising devotion to Scripture as the infallible guide to all matters of worship and church government, these people were called (by their enemies) "precisionists" or Puritans. It was they who thrived on sermons. In fact, as their great Anglican opponent Richard Hooker reported with exasperation, they were obsessed with sermons—and "not sermons read neither (for such they ... abhor in the church), but sermons without book, sermons which spend their life in their birth and have public audience but once."

WHY THIS FERVENT—even fanatical—love of preaching? The historian Harry Stout estimates that in the early communities established by Puritans who migrated to New England, "the average weekly churchgoer ... listened to something like seven thousand sermons in a lifetime." Typically, there was one weekday sermon (usually on Thursday) and two sermons on Sunday. These were the central events of edification and entertainment in a culture in which literacy rates were high and esteem for rival literary forms was low, in which "theatricals" were prohibited and reading or writing poetry was chiefly a form of private devotion.

Even in old England, where alternative literary forms were more plentiful (before the closing of the theaters), Puritan clergy were tireless teachers and the laity were willing students. Some of the most famous Puritan preachers, while still young men with divinity degrees fresh in hand, were hired as "lecturers" by parishioners who wanted more than a few prescribed homilies. (Anglican canon law required only four per year.) What these sermon-hungry people got were not formal addresses so much as partly memorized, partly improvised talks that sometimes followed a back-and-forth structure of question-and-answer, as if the preacher were recounting some recent conversation with a troubled member of his flock. Here, from John Winthrop's lay sermon (Winthrop, the Governor of Massachusetts Bay, was never an ordained clergyman) delivered aboard the ship that was carrying him and his fellow emigrants to New England, is one such rhetorical exchange:

> QUEST. What rule must we observe in lending?
> ANS. Thou must observe whether thy brother hath present or probable or possible meanes of repayeing thee, if ther be none of these, thou must give him according to his necessity....

The Puritan sermon was a flexible form that moved between elucidating points of theology and addressing ethical questions of daily life, such as how to understand one's obligation to needy neighbors, to unruly children, to failing parents—questions that, in an emerging market culture, were increasingly vexed. The preacher drew heavily on Scripture as the ultimate source of moral knowledge (one notable feature in the historical development of the sermon form as presented in this collection is the declining density of biblical allusion); but it was the hearer's response—not the elegance or the erudition of the preacher—that finally mattered, since the whole reason for delivering the sermon was that the fate of the hearer's soul was at stake. Yet even the most revered "soul-physicians," as Puritan preachers were called, were merely God's instruments for awakening those whose complacence had hitherto blocked the self-questioning without which conversion cannot begin. To enlarge the possibility that people of "mean understanding" might grasp God's word, and to reduce the possibility that the preacher would take pride in his own sonorous phrases or figures of speech, Puritans preached unadorned sermons in the "plain style." The sword of truth, they believed, wanted no "velvet scabbard."

It was in early New England—Warner

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points out that only a single seventeenth-century sermon is known to survive from south of New England—that the basic four-part homiletical structure was established that has governed American sermons for nearly four hundred years. First, a passage from Scripture was read; then its Scriptural context was explained; then the doctrine was adduced; and the sermon concluded with a "use" or "application" to daily life. The one commitment that liberalism and fundamentalism have always shared is their common devotion to such sermons.

In this regard, Puritanism was a source of both traditions. Never really a fundamentalist creed, it was perhaps the last convincing synthesis of faith and reason to which educated people gave broad assent. Puritans were liberals in the sense that they subjected all received "truths" to the test of experience; "goe home and consider," as John Cotton put it, "whether the things that have been taught were true or no." But Puritans were deeply pious in the fundamentalist sense that their God never worked primarily through offices or sacraments or even doctrines; He worked through the emotional effect of the spoken word, whose fleeting nature—uttered, heard, gone—suited the ineffability and the uncontainability of grace.

The explosive and transformative power of the word meant that preaching would never become what Emerson (in many respects a latter-day Puritan) called a "perpetual institution." As Richard Hooker had ruefully understood, such sermons spent "their life in their birth and [had] public audience but once." They were unrepeatable experiences; or, to put it more positively, every sermon—if the minister brought true devotion to his task—was a new attempt, adapted to a new moment, to connect the stories, symbols, and speeches of Scripture to life in the present.

THE RELIGION FROM which these sermons tumbled in such profusion was at the same time highly rational and, in the modern sense, critical. Puritans were extremely eloquent in saying what religion was *not*. It was not pomp, or ritual, or rules handed down by ecclesiastical authority—in all of which they saw power masquerading as piety. This is the aspect of Puritanism that points directly to the subjectivist anti-institutionalism that we meet in purest form in Warner's selection from Emerson—the sermon in which he explained to his Brahmin congregation, in 1832, why officiating at the Lord's Supper had become for him an act of false flattery to a dead tradition. "This mode of commemorating Christ is not suitable to me ... I will love him as a glorified friend after the free way of friendship." Attached to this confession of what some of his contemporaries considered apostasy was a theory of religious evolution in which liberal historicism and fundamentalist pietism were meant to be fused: "The Jewish was a religion of forms; the Pagan was a religion of forms" until "God was pleased to ... send forth a man to teach men that ... sacrifice was smoke and forms were shadows." True religion sheds its incidentals and keeps its substance: "Jesus came to take the load of ceremonies from the shoulders of men and substitute principles."

As preachers closer to the pietistic side of Puritanism have always known, however, this sort of critical, rational religion tends to wither into moralism. Consider Phillips Brooks, the worthy Bostonian who came to maturity in Emerson's last years and whose name is borne to this day by Harvard's community-service student center. Brooks is fluent when he speaks of what religion is not. It is not, he says, a matter of resting on "the cushions of ... dogma ... and ceremony." But when he tries to say what religion is, he fumbles: "True religion is, at its soul, spiritual sympathy with, spiritual obedience to God." Who could argue with this proposition? And who could say what it means?

A religion founded on "principles" may be noble and fine; but when Brooks imagines the Jews receiving the principles of the decalogue, he paints a sublime scene in which "everything bore witness to the presence of God." Sinai "was full of fire and smoke. Thunderings and voices were bursting from its mysterious awfulness. Great trumpet-blasts came pealing through the frightened air." One understands why Brooks, the descendant of Puritans, worked devotedly in his later years with H.H. Richardson to build the neo-Romanesque Trinity Church in Boston's Copley Square—complete with the sort of sensuous accoutrements (organ, stained glass) that his forebears had shunned. He knew that religion without awe was lost.

Fundamentalists have always known this. The first stirrings of a fundamentalist reaction came from within Puritanism itself, when the dissident Anne Hutchinson denounced the New England ministry for codifying their once-living faith into rules of rote observance. "Tell not me of ... duties," she said, "but tell me of Christ." Speaking in the same key nearly three centuries later, Billy Sunday echoes her: "Many a preacher, instead of trying to feed ... spiritual hunger, is giving some book review [but] the world is not hungry for a religion of theory." If one prefers one's fundamentalism in measured doses, it is available in Warner's book from J. Gre-

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sham Machen, a conservative Presbyterian who taught at Princeton and Westminster seminaries in the 1920s and 1930s. Liberals, in Machen's words, turn Christ from a deity into "the fairest flower of humanity [who] lived a life of remarkable purity and unselfishness." They demote him, as does Emerson in his Lord's Supper sermon, from Messiah to friend. This "liberal Christ," as Machen explicitly calls him, may be someone's hero or "role-model"—but he will never be worshipped as God incarnate.

The history of liberal religion in America tends to confirm Machen's view that "philosophical theism has never been a powerful force in the world." One recalls the old quip that the Unitarian trinity is the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, and the neighborhood of Boston. It is a stale joke, but it goes some distance toward recognizing that to the extent that the miracle stories upon which a religion is based are reduced to myth or archetype, the rationalized faith loses its power of contagion and consolation. "To aim to convert a man by miracles is a profanation of the soul," Emerson declared in a sermon not reprinted here. "A true conversion, a true Christ, is now, as always, to be made by the reception of beautiful sentiments." But when we hear beautiful sentiments from the well-named Harry Emerson Fosdick, founder of New York's ecumenical Riverside Church, and learn from him that "to believe in virgin birth as an explanation of great personality is one of the familiar ways in which the ancient world was accustomed to account for unusual superiority," we are no longer listening to a sermon. We are attending a lecture.

ONCE THIS SORT of dilution is identified and decried, what is the positive response from the fundamentalists' side in what might be called the religious culture wars? What can they offer to counter "the warm, deceptive, calcium-light of modern sentimentality," as Machen calls it? In effect, they reassert the veracity of the miracles, and leave it at that. "Some folks do not believe in miracles," Billy Sunday said. "I do." Machen concurred:

> The Bible account of Jesus contains mysteries, but the essence of it can be put almost in a word. Jesus of Nazareth was not a product of the world, but a Saviour come from outside the world. His birth was a mystery.... His death was no mere holy martyrdom ... His resurrection was not an aspiration in the hearts of His disciples, but a mighty act of God.

What we witness in *American Sermons*, then, is a mutually destructive war between two factions of a once-united community. Liberals are right that the force of modernity cannot be resisted. Fundamentalists are right that once the miracles are historicized and rationalized, religious faith is unlikely to survive the process of demystification.

The most intelligent observers of religion in America have recognized this impasse for a long time. When Henry Adams journeyed to Chartres, he exclaimed, in almost unbearable awareness of his own jaded modernity: "Unless you can go back to your dolls, you are out of place here." Having come of age in a modern Protestant world in which "one no longer adopts an idea unless it is driven in with hammers of statistics and columns of figures," Adams was almost undone by his craving to get back the child's innocent credulity that he associated with medieval Catholicism. Seventy years earlier, when Emerson gave up the pulpit, it was because he understood the contradiction of going through the formal motion of commemorating the last supper of someone whom rationality had declared to be merely a man. "Men have come to speak of the revelation as somewhat long ago given and done, as if God were dead," he said to the graduating class of the Harvard Divinity School a few years after having left the Unitarian church. By that time he was seeking, in what came to be known as "transcendentalism," a new kind of religion—one that might find in nature and in language itself the renovating power and hope for immortality that Christianity had once promised. "The priest departs," as Walt Whitman put it, "the divine literatus comes."

IN EMERSON'S MIGRATION from pulpit to podium, we see the limits of Warner's book. It fails to convey how the role of the sermon has changed fundamentally in modern American life. There are distinguished contemporary preachers represented in the volume, but by comparison to their authoritative models from the past, their sermons feel forced and even false—abortive efforts at shoring up this or that theological idea threatened with extinction. We get Tillich on *Schadenfreude* as a species of sin, Niebuhr on the question of how one might dare to speak of providence in a post-Nazi world, Heschel on the human propensity to self-exculpation by demonizing others, Sheen on the idea of eternity as a constituent element of happiness. They are valiant efforts, each in its own way, to rescue an idea (sin, providence, evil, immortality) without which religion cannot prosper. But their valiance notwithstanding, these sermons have a certain diffidence, a whiff of the academic, as they try to recoup ideas that once had self-evident power and now need defining and defending.

Modern intellectuals, in other words, have been hampered and uneasy in the old preaching role—as Emerson was—and they have largely ceded it to populist evangelicals. (They have found other ways to preach.) Yet Warner still favors them in making his selections. The result is a distorted book that gives the impression that preaching remains vital for highly educated practitioners and audiences, and scants the kinds of sermons—retrograde or odious as they may seem to secular liberals—that have really counted in modern America. It is, I presume, owing to their failure to pass some intellectual or literary test that Warner omits some of the most listened-to preachers in our history—from the antebellum revivalist Charles Grandison Finney, and the radio priest of the Depression years, Charles Coughlin, to the man who has arguably preached to more people than anyone in the history of the world, Billy Graham.

RELIGIOUS IDEAS, OF COURSE, have survived the intellectuals' abandonment of the homiletical form. But one cannot glean from this book how this happened—how the tradition of the sermon has spilled into literature and politics, and carried its attenuated symbols into what is sometimes called America's "civil religion." There is a case to be made that the sermon tradition properly includes Emerson's Divinity School Address (delivered after he left the church), with its search for a "new Teacher" who might once again show "the world to be the mirror of the soul"; or Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address (he was never a regular churchgoer), with its quest for signs that God's providence is working through the calamitous war; or William Jennings Bryan's "Cross of Gold" speech, with its call for holy war against the forces of Mammon.

Indeed, even some notable preachers of recent times are best remembered not for their sermons, but for speeches, lectures, and other writings by which they have broken out of denominational limits and reached believers and unbelievers alike. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail" is more stirring, and his "I Have a Dream" speech more historically significant, than the rather tepid sermon on conformity by which he is represented here. (King's last sermon, delivered the night before he was assassinated, is also included.) Reinhold Niebuhr is more likely to be remembered for such books as *The Irony of American History* and *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (originally delivered as university lectures) than for the sermon on providence that one

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encounters in this book.

As an informed selection of sermons strictly defined, however, this is a rich and valuable volume. It reminds us how central to American culture has been the conviction (I revert to John Jay Chapman for the phrase) that "there's only one real joy in life ... the joy of casting at the world the stone of an unknown world"—and how elusive that joy has been in modern times. It confirms that sermons, once widely believed to be conduits to this "unknown world," have, in our own time, become memorials to lost knowledge. ■

The Lost Cause

By OMER BARTOV

"Final Solution": Nazi Population Policy and the Murder of the European Jews by Götz Aly translated by Belinda Cooper and Allison Brown

(Oxford University Press, 305 pp., $75, paper $19.95)

I.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN Holocaust scholarship have done away with many conventional interpretations. It appears that the paralyzing effect of the horror on any attempt to explain its origins has gradually diminished. More and more historians are willing now to examine the roots of the Holocaust with a good measure of detachment. Careful archival research, the meticulous reconstruction of past circumstances, and sober evaluations of their protagonists' perceptions and motivations have largely—though by no means entirely—replaced earlier assertions of incomprehension and ineffability, of moral indignation and accusatory wrath.

Generally speaking, one can only welcome this calmer trend in the historiography of Nazism and the Holocaust. Since more scholars than ever before, in the United States, Europe, and Israel, are engaged in research on this period, and since previously inaccessible archives in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union are at last open to them, our knowledge and our understanding of modern genocide has been tremendously enhanced. Indeed, we have shown ourselves to be far better at explaining past atrocities than at preventing present atrocities, which should cast some doubt on the notion of humanity's ability to learn history's lessons.

Still, the new expansion of knowledge and interpretation has neither augmented the scholarly consensus nor significantly diminished the professional, national, and ideological biases so characteristic of modern historiography. Indeed, some of the biases and deficiencies of contemporary Holocaust scholarship may be traced back to the conflicts and the traditions of the very period under scrutiny. The two most influential schools of interpretation of Nazism and the Holocaust have been labeled "intentionalism" and "functionalism." The former stresses the centrality of Hitler and views the destruction of the Jews as a long-term project planned well in advance; the latter dwells on the structural characteristics of the Third Reich and presents the Holocaust as the outcome of inter-governmental rivalries and self-imposed logistical constraints. Intentionalists insist on ideological imperatives and the realization of a genocidal program; functionalists dismiss Hitler's role and emphasize the logic of modern bureaucratic norms and procedures, while relegating abstract ideological tenets to the level of empty rhetoric.

The division is not, of course, so tidy. In recent years, both sides in the debate have moved closer to their antagonists and have given up some of their more extreme positions; some of the vehemence that characterized the controversy in the 1970s and 1980s has abated. And yet we can still tell the intentionalists from the functionalists. Despite some notable exceptions, moreover, we can also identify the origins of these positions, and their implications for individual and national identity, and therefore what they tend to miss, to overlook, or purposely to leave out.

INTENTIONALISM HAS BEEN promoted largely by non-German scholars. Intellectually, it may derive from a belief in the unique nature of Prussian authoritarianism, German anti-Semitism, or Nazi racism. If it is propounded by not a few Jewish scholars, this is mainly owing to the fact that many of those writing on the Holocaust are Jews, and that most Jews writing on the Holocaust do not live in Germany. One prominent exception to this rule is the German historian Eberhard Jäckel, who is often attacked by his colleagues for insisting on the centrality of Hitler's ideology and political role; but even Jäckel has not gone beyond an analysis of Hitler's writings and speeches to examine German public opinion (that is, Hitler's reception) or to reconstruct the creation of the "concentrationary universe" (that is, Hitler's function as leader). Some intentionalists, such as Lucy Dawidowicz, have paid a great deal of attention to the Jewish victims, to their perceptions and misperceptions of German policies, to their struggle to survive, and to the conditions of their destruction. Others, such as Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, have insisted on the manner in which the perpetrators' anti-Semitism motivated them not merely to kill, but also to derive pleasure from the killing. Neither perspective is common among German scholars.

Functionalism is the product, and remains at the basis of, German scholarship on the Holocaust. The most important and the most influential historians of the Third Reich and the Holocaust in West Germany in the 1970s were Martin Broszat and Hans Mommsen. They are commonly considered to be the founders of functionalism, or "structuralism," as the fundamental interpretive paradigm of Nazism in Germany. In this reading, ideology is recognized and then dismissed as irrelevant; the suffering of the victims is readily acknowledged and then omitted as having nothing to tell us about the mechanics of genocide; individual perpetrators, from Hitler, Himmler, and Heydrich to the lowliest SS-man, are shoved out of the historical picture as contemptible but ultimately unimportant pawns in the larger scheme of a "plutocratic state" whose predilection for "cumulative radicalization" was a function of its structure rather than the product of intentional planning or self-proclaimed will.

Again, there are important exceptions to this rule. The German historian Andreas Hillgruber emphasized Hitler's role in planning and directing Germany's

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war; except for a few short essays, though, Hillgruber never did research on the Holocaust, and toward the end of his life he insisted on the need of Germans to identify with their own history and not with the history of their victims. Raul Hilberg's magnum opus *The Destruction of the European Jews*, which first appeared in 1961 and in a revised and expanded version in 1985, can be seen in some ways as the originator of functionalism, though Hilberg came to the United States before the war as an Austrian Jewish refugee; but in truth Hilberg's book is very much concerned with the deeper roots of Nazism, which he identifies in the first chapter with a long anti-Jewish Christian tradition, and deeply preoccupied with the reactions of the Jews to Nazi policies. (Indeed, his statements on the alleged absence of Jewish resistance and the complicity of community leaders in the genocide have subjected him to incessant attacks by many other Jewish scholars.) And the American scholar Christopher Browning calls himself a moderate functionalist, but his best-known work, *Ordinary Men*, which appeared in 1992, ventures into an area that no German functionalist has approached, namely, the actions and the motivations of face-to-face killers. Browning coolly zeroed in on the horror of the killing rather than remaining with the so-called *Schreibtischtäter* (desk-murderers) so beloved of German functionalists.

II.

Götz Aly belongs to a younger generation of German scholars who have been busily revising much of what their elders wrote, but without wholly rejecting some of their assumptions. Born after the war, between the late 1940s and the early 1960s, these hard-working historians are extremely adept at archival work, and they are less wary about exploding national myths and apologetic conventions than the previous generation (whose own mentors were more often than not complicit with the Nazi regime). And yet these younger scholars do not entirely depart the tradition in which they were raised; and so their prose is often inaccessible to laymen, their methodology is conservative, and their *Fragestellung* is in most cases limited in scope and ambition.

Aly is one of the most original, prolific, and controversial figures in this new cohort of historians. This may partly explain his "outsider" status in the German historical guild, his public reputation notwithstanding. Aly's *"Final Solution,"* his finest achievement so far, appeared in German in 1995. Since then he has become involved in a major controversy in Germany over the complicity of German historians in planning the Third Reich's policies of ethnic cleansing and resettlement in the East (to which there are some brief references in this book), and the cover-up of this episode by those scholars and by their students in the postwar years.

Aly relishes such disputes; the spirit of '68 wafts through his polemic. Yet his arguments cannot be dismissed easily, since he is an indefatigable researcher as well as a powerful writer. His prose has a way of shifting from not entirely supportable generalizations to excessively meticulous presentations of documents and bureaucratic procedures; but his conclusions are always challenging and provocative. And yet, for all his standing as the *enfant terrible* of his field, Aly remains a part of the German scholarly discourse on the Holocaust. He disagrees with, and fiercely criticizes, many of his colleagues, but his own perspective is very much in line with the reigning consensus over the main paradigms of Nazi historiography in Germany.

Aly makes several important assertions in *"Final Solution."* For a start, he claims that by focusing primarily on "the inner workings of the perpetrators," his study differs radically from most other works on the Holocaust, which "have made the victims' perspective their own." While "the view from the perpetrators' perspective is bound to be upsetting," he observes, "the subject matter—the decision-making process leading to the Holocaust—forces us to look inside the minds of the administrators and planners." He is right, of course, about the need to understand the motivation of the perpetrators; but he is quite wrong in claiming to be the first to have formulated or pursued this objective. Most German scholarship on the Holocaust, and much of the rest of the historiography of this period, is concerned with the perpetrators. This can be demonstrated bibliographically and anecdotally. Aly flatters himself.

But this first argument is closely linked to a second, and two-sided, argument. On the one hand, Aly claims, "what to the victims must have seemed the horrible efficiency of the bureaucracy of death appeared ... in the eyes of the perpetrators ... as an unbroken series of defeats, an inability to approach their goals, once established"; or to put it more bluntly, "the activities of Himmler, Heydrich, and Eichmann can thus be described as a chronology of failure." On the other hand, while the alleged persistence of the victims' "one-sided view" of the Holocaust is "understandable," Aly believes that it "leads historical analysis astray and causes it to almost ignore the 'positive' aspects of Nazi population policies," that is, the extent to which the Nazis believed that they were constructing a better world even as they were murdering millions of human beings.

This is, to say the least, a problematic assertion. A proper understanding of the Holocaust, to be sure, requires that its implementation be viewed also from the perspective of the organizers; and there is little doubt that—as Himmler asserted in his infamous speech in Posen in 1943—they believed themselves to be engaged in a glorious undertaking of conquest, demographic restructuring, and the resettlement of a new Lebensraum by members of the "Aryan" race. But surely the genocide that this entailed was not merely the "negative" side of an otherwise "positive" program. It was also what made the SS "strong," the true elite and vanguard of the Volk. Hence the Germans' "living space" became everyone else's killing space. Aly's focus on the Nazi sense of failure in their population policies as the source of the Holocaust leads him to neglect the remarkable feeling of triumphalism that the murder of the Jews engendered in the Nazis.

And this leads us to the core of the book, and Aly's third and central argument. Using a mass of documents from Himmler's offices in his capacity as Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood (*Reichkommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums*, or RKF), along with other sources on resettlement and deportation, as well as on the systematic murder of the mentally handicapped, Aly demonstrates in chilling detail the elaborate links between these policies and the emergence of the "Final Solution." (German scholars tend to put such terms as "Final Solution" or "Führer" in inverted commas, lest readers take them literally, and also to indicate their own distance from the Nazi vocabulary.)

Between 1939 and 1941, as Aly persuasively argues, several key Nazi agencies, including the SS and the Führer's Chancellery, were engaged in an attempt to change radically the demographic structure of the occupied parts of Poland. For this program, three elements became crucial: bringing ethnic Germans from the East (under agreement with the Soviet Union and other countries) to be resettled in the Greater German Reich; making room for those new "Aryan" arrivals by pushing out the Polish population; and ridding Germany and its newly annexed or occupied territories of the Jews. At the

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same time, the regime murdered some 70,000 inmates of insane asylums in Germany and tens of thousands more in occupied Poland (and later in occupied Soviet territory). These actions were presented as a cleansing of the "Aryan" genetic pool, as a means to save taxpayers money, and as the inevitable consequence of the need to free hospital beds for soldiers and to provide temporary housing for newly arrived ethnic Germans who could not yet be resettled on farms requisitioned from deported Poles.

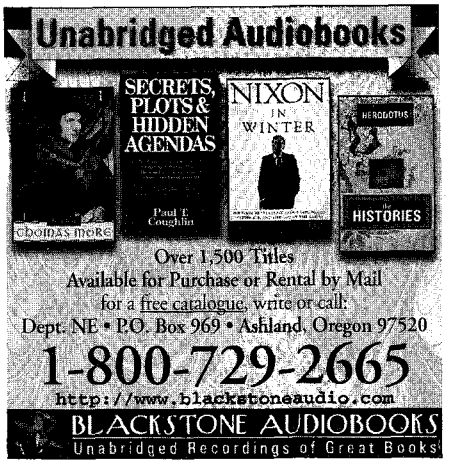
The "positive" sides of this policy were a total failure. Indeed, these actions often contradicted each other. Ethnic Germans spent long periods waiting for their promised farms in what increasingly came to resemble concentration camps. Plans to deport Jews from Germany, Austria, Bohemia, and the annexed provinces of Poland had to be postponed, because priority was given to deporting Poles from their farms to make room for ethnic Germans, and because there were neither enough trains available nor sufficient space in which to "dump" them. Hans Frank, the man in charge of the Generalgouvernement (the part of German-occupied Poland not annexed to the Reich), had bigger plans for his fiefdom and refused to make it into the "dumping ground" of the regime's undesirables, especially since the army was now claiming vast territories there for training and then for staging areas in preparation for the attack against the Soviet Union.

By the summer of 1940, it seemed that Himmler's grandiose demographic plans had come to a total standstill. Not knowing what to do with "their" Jews, but certain that they would eventually have to go "somewhere," the Nazi authorities in Poland concentrated them in a few major ghettoes, such as Warsaw and Lodz, and awaited a decision from the top. First they hoped to deport them to the so-called Lublin reservation in the Generalgouvernement, but Frank would not relent. Then, after the defeat of France, the idea of deporting the Jews to Madagascar was floated, soon to sink again when Britain, which still ruled the waves, refused to lay down its arms. By then, however, plans were already being hatched for the attack on the Soviet Union. The demographic experts of the SS now saw an opportunity vastly to expand the scope of their project, renamed the General Plan East (*Generalplan Ost*, or GPO), whereby tens of millions of Poles, Russians, and Jews would be deported and murdered, and many other millions of Slavs subjugated, so as to facilitate the creation of a huge new "living space" in Western Russia.

That the Jews would die in vast numbers was already clear to these "ethnocrats" long before the invasion of Russia was launched on June 22, 1941. During the early months of the campaign, however, only Soviet Jews were being killed en masse by the *Einsatzgruppen* (the murder squads of the SS and SD), first men only and soon thereafter whole communities, whereas other Jews were supposed to be worked to death as slave labor or to be deported farther East into the depths of the Soviet Union. It was not until the tide turned in the Russian campaign, when it transpired in the fall of 1941 that the Wehrmacht would not defeat the Red Army in a rapid Blitzkrieg, that the SS developed and began to build more sophisticated killing facilities for Jews.

All that remained, then, of the ambitious demographic plans of the regime and its innumerable experts (many of whom held academic degrees and continued their careers long after 1945) was the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question." For Aly, and this is his fourth and final argument, there was no decision on what we now know as the Holocaust. The genocide of the Jews developed almost imperceptibly as the outcome of everything that transpired before it: the failed resettlement project, the inability to defeat the Red Army, and the skill acquired in killing the handicapped and shipping masses of people from one part of the Nazi empire to another. In Aly's account, the Holocaust was the result of a new organizational expertise, and an indifference to human life, and a habituation to brutality, all combined with frustration and a growing desire to succeed after so many mishaps and frustrations.

Here Aly is in general agreement with the older functionalists. Still, he proposes some significant modifications. He insists that one cannot analyze the emergence of the Holocaust in isolation from other ethnic and eugenic policies of the regime between 1939 and 1941. He also rejects the early functionalist argument that the Holocaust originated in a series of initiatives by low-level and middle-level officials on the ground who carried out local murder operations, that it was only later systematized into a state-organized genocide. Aly shows, rather, that a genocidal urge was evident in all echelons of the Nazi administration even before the war in Russia, and he suggests that precisely the most radical proposals emanating from officials of various ranks were widely circulated, discussed, and eventually adopted, in a kind of collective quest for a final solution to an irksome problem. Aly also, and quite rightly, dismisses the dis-



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tinction made by such functionalists as Broszat between the "positive" and "negative" aspects of the regime. For the seemingly progressive policies of the Third Reich—such as better housing and social services—were predicated on the exclusion, the deportation, or the elimination of those undesirable racial and political "elements" which allegedly had prevented the racial utopia of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, or national community, in the first place.

But finally, and very much in keeping with the functionalist consensus of the German historiography of the Holocaust, Aly believes that Hitler never gave an order to unleash the "Final Solution." He adds that the Führer, beyond his promises to back up those who came up with the most effective and extreme "solution" to the "problem" posed by the Jews, was not especially interested in the details of their extermination.

III.

"FINAL SOLUTION" is an important addition to the literature on the origins of the Holocaust, and it should be read by anyone who wishes to understand the context within which the genocide of the Jews occurred. "Population policies" and "ethnic cleansing" have become almost a regular feature of world politics in the second half of the twentieth century, and so it is crucial to comprehend their relationship to mass murder. For this reason, the translation of Aly's book into English is welcome, though it is an infelicitous and occasionally imprecise translation, and a few unfortunate errors remain in the text.

It is precisely the importance of the book that makes it necessary to point out its limitations. The main problem lies not so much with what Aly says, but rather with what he does not say. Some very significant things are missing from this book. These lacunae are themselves very much part of the German functionalist tradition. Some of these shortcomings are not lost even upon Aly himself; but the paragraph in which he demonstrates his awareness of his omissions is curiously absent from the German original, and appears only in the English translation.

Aly argues that the German leadership, in putting an official halt to the "euthanasia" campaign in August 1941 (but without actually stopping the secret mass murder of the mentally handicapped throughout the war in other places and in other forms), "reacted subtly and flexibly to the public 'mood.'" And he proceeds to the following assertion:

> Conversely, this meant that Hitler, Himmler, and Heydrich felt sure of the support, or at least the passivity, of the overwhelming majority when they began the comprehensive murder of European Jewry a few weeks later. We can do no more than pose the question here, as the apparatus of authority is the focus of this book. A study on what the Germans thought of the "solution of the Jewish question" in 1941 has yet to be written. It would be methodologically difficult, but should without question be attempted.

Now, it is false that such studies of German public opinion do not exist. Suffice it to mention David Bankier's *The Germans and the Final Solution: Public Opinion under Nazism*, which appeared in 1992, and Jörg Wollenberg's edited volume, *The German Public and the Persecution of the Jews, 1933-1945: "No One Participated, No One Knew,"* which appeared in German in 1989. Moreover, the fact that Aly's book is concerned with "the apparatus of authority" should in no way eliminate the question of public opinion. After all, if this apparatus was influenced by public opinion in the case of the murder of the handicapped—indeed, if the regime was greatly interested in the public "mood" and devoted much energy to gauging it, as we know it did—how can this issue be dismissed in the case of the Holocaust?

And how is it that Aly, who is especially interested in middle-ranking officials, has nothing to say about their own attitudes toward those they were killing? He writes that these "technocrats" were anything but "spineless functionaries," that "at the intermediate and lower levels, there were committed people involved who were convinced of the necessity and rightness of their actions. They did not view themselves as tools, but as active, recognized protagonists." So much for the banality of evil. And yet Aly never inquires into their anti-Semitic motivation. The German scholar Dieter Pohl, who has exhaustively studied the Holocaust in Eastern Galicia, has discovered that many of those Nazi functionaries were indeed committed anti-Semites.

Aly's assertion that this issue ought to be the focus of another study is akin to investigating slavery in the United States while leaving the question of racism to some other time. He does concede that "ideology did ... remain important in so far as it sufficiently undermined the moral and legal barriers in the minds of the perpetrators, serving as a justification for their murderous acts." Yet he insists that "a purely ideological explanation ... did not play any significant role in the actual decisions made." A purely ideological explanation would indeed be sorely deficient; but this is just as true about an interpretation of the events that leaves ideology entirely out. Anyway, human motivation is surely too complicated to be "purely" explained by anything.

Moreover, Aly's description of Hitler as largely uninvolved in the decision-making process about the extermination of the Jews is hardly consistent with what we know about his fanatical anti-Semitism and his insistence on the need to destroy the Jews especially if a world war were to break out (an eventuality for which he began preparing as soon as he "seized power" in Germany). Aly himself cites some of Hitler's pronouncements in this rabid vein. We also know that Hitler played a key role in the "euthanasia" campaign, and that he signed a written authorization to murder the mentally handicapped. To assume that Hitler was happy to step aside and let the "Final Solution" somehow occur, while throughout his "career," from the early 1920s to his political testament written on the eve of his suicide in April 1945, he saw the Jews as the most formidable evil threatening Germany, makes no sense at all.

ALY MAKES A convincing case for the evolution of anti-Jewish policies in Poland from the project of "ethnic cleansing" and resettlement during the first two years of the war; but surely this fails to explain, as Saul Friedländer has noted, why the deportation of Jews from Central and Western Europe to the crowded ghettoes, camps, and killing installations in the East would have had anything to do with the demographic restructuring of Eastern Europe. Nor is it at all clear why the failure of *Volkspolitik* in 1941 "naturally" led to the genocide of the Jews, if we accept Aly's assertion that ideology played no role in the decision-making process. Only a prior ideological commitment to a *judenrein* Europe would have made the move from "ethnic policies" to genocide appear as obvious as it did to the perpetrators.

There can be no doubt that in the Nazi mind the Jews differed essentially from all other real or imagined enemies. Aly himself cites a number of documents that indicate the regime's interest in "re-Germanizing" Slavs, such as Poles, Czechs, and Slovenes, who appeared to Himmler's "race-experts" as having "Aryan" features. Hitler was not opposed to assimilating some Poles, and he believed that the majority of the Czech people could be "Germanized." Indeed, according to Aly, "the Germans treated Poles and Jews quite differently in their deportation to the Generalgouvernement, especially with regard to material expropriation; it affected the Jewish population, right from the beginning of the occupation, incom-

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parably more severely than the Polish." For one thing, mass theft of Jewish property constituted a crucial component in financing the entire resettlement program. Worse still, writes Aly, "the expropriation of Jewish property, in contrast to that of the majority of the Poles, was not dependent on concrete resettlement; it was anticipatory. That is, the Jews—and only the Jews—were robbed of almost their entire means of subsistence and thus turned into a 'superfluous,' 'unproductive' population; but, because of a lack of deportation opportunities, they at first remained in the country. Thus was the material basis for the image of the filthy, loafing Jewish black marketeer created."

YET HAVING ACKNOWLEDGED the "special" status of the Jews in the German racial hierarchy, Aly explains neither its origins (after all, anti-Semitic stereotypes existed long before the Jews were robbed of all their possessions) nor its role in his tale of "ethnic policies." The Jews were never subjected to such racial screening; they were the anti-race (associated for many people with the Anti-Christ), and they had to be completely eradicated. The decision to murder the Jews, rather than to somehow make them disappear into a far-off land, the timing of that decision, and the manner in which the genocide was ultimately carried out, were obviously influenced by the context of events, among which Himmler's plan of racial restructuring was a major component. But to argue that one can explain the origins of the Holocaust without any attempt to analyze the impact of traditional anti-Semitism, and the regime's anti-Jewish propaganda and indoctrination, and the attitudes of the men who were actually organizing the genocide, is to misunderstand much of what the Holocaust was about.

Curiously, several documents cited by Aly point in precisely this direction, though they are interpreted differently by him. Peter-Heinz Seraphim, one of Himmler's "ethnocrats," wrote in October 1940 that the Generalgouvernement, the very area supposed to serve as a "dumping ground" for the Jews, was "already essentially oversaturated with Jews." Consequently, he claimed that "the Jewish question has become a first degree problem of mass population policy," and concluded that "this gives rise to one long-term goal: the demographic cleansing of this area, which can only be hinted at here." Similarly, Aly himself provides documentation to show that in the killing of inmates of mental institutions, the treatment of Jewish patients "clearly differed from the murder of 'Aryan' patients. While the Germans were killed selectively, according to criteria that included length of hospital stay, ability to work, and medical diagnosis and prognosis, the Jews became victims of 'euthanasia' collectively, solely on the basis of their racial classification."

All this notwithstanding, Aly's book remains under the spell of earlier German works on National Socialism and the Holocaust. His book is predicated on the notion that anti-Semitism was marginal to the entire undertaking, and that public attitudes, and the ideological dispositions of the officials involved in the organization and the implementation of genocide, were a negligible factor in the determination of policies. This insistence is all the more curious since Aly's book reconstructs a quasi-realized plan that required the deportation of Poles to make room for ethnic Germans, and the "emigration" of Jews so as "to make more room for Poles," as Himmler put it in December 1940.

Since the Jews had to disappear, but had nowhere to go, they were first ghettoized and then murdered. And when all other plans fell through, even when the fronts were collapsing and Germany was about to be invaded, the Jews remained what they were from the very beginning: Germany's first and primary target. The economic calculations that were supposedly at the root of this vast demographic upheaval were initially used to legitimize the murder of the Jews, but they were discarded as soon as they appeared to indicate the need to preserve the Jews as extra laborer. As the German scholar Ulrich Herbert and others have written, the Nazi idea of *Vernichtung durch Arbeit*, or destruction through labor, may have applied to the Jews for part of the time, but the systematic killing of millions of productive human beings capable of contributing to Germany's war effort was ideologically determined. The "ethnocrats" of the SS may have come up with ingenious arguments to justify killing as an economically sound means to prevent overpopulation and to bring about a modernization of the economy and a Germanization of the Reich's Lebensraum in the East, but there can be no doubt that, from the standpoint of the German war effort, this was a disastrous decision. And yet this decision was taken and implemented.

IV.

ON JULY 16, 1941, Rolf-Heinz Höppner, charged with "resettlement affairs" in Posen and already involved in the murder of thousands of mentally ill patients in the Warthegau, the renamed annexed western province of Poland, wrote a memorandum to his boss,

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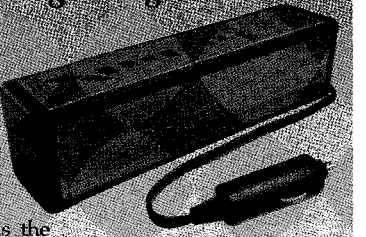

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Adolf Eichmann:

> There is a danger that, in the coming winter, it will become impossible to feed all the Jews. It must seriously be considered whether the most humane solution is to finish off the Jews unfit for labor through some fast-acting means. This would definitely be more pleasant than letting them starve to death.

This was one kind of rationalization of genocide: mass murder as the humane solution to an economic impasse. But another rationalization was offered for the mass murder of those Jews who were fit for work. Since the invasion of the Soviet Union a few weeks earlier, all Jewish men of military age (and hence fit for work) were being massacred by the *Einsatzgruppen* as a security risk and as potential Bolsheviks. And following this "first sweep," the SS was charged with killing the remaining women, children, and old men, as "unproductives" or "useless mouths to feed."

For Aly, the "Final Solution" was the last phase of a long process in which the Jews increasingly came to be seen as a population that had to be done away with so as to make possible the implementation of the demographic restructuring that had bogged down due to military and logistical failure. In the summer and the fall of 1941, "the term 'evacuation' became a synonym for murder," and all that was needed were a few "last remaining—minuscule—steps in the building of a complete extermination machine." In early October, Hitler "requested" that the Jews be moved "farther East" to areas not clearly defined. At this point Himmler and Heydrich ordered the construction of extermination camps that would serve as those destinations in the "East" to which the Jews would be "evacuated." And so Aly believes that "the final step between making the political decision and actually carrying out the plans was an extremely small one ... under the conditions of this dictatorship.... "

It follows, in Aly's view, that the Wannsee conference, which was convened on January 20, 1942 after several postponements, was merely Heydrich's successful attempt to gain the political consensus by "all ... central institutions directly involved with these issues in respect to bringing their goals into line" (as the conference records put it), the issue being "the evacuation of the Jews to the East." The meeting ensured cooperation between various government agencies, and no less importantly it "incorporate[d] the 'final solution' into the daily bureaucratic and political routines of the German state and organize[d] a division of labour." This "made it possible for each person to avoid any individual responsibility, instead entering into partly active, but generally passive, complicity with the government."

As Aly forcefully puts it, "nothing more was demanded of the individual. Nothing more was necessary in Germany." Viewed from the perspective of public opinion, Aly argues that both the "euthanasia" campaign and the later "Final Solution" were a "secret Reich matter" that "was actually public." This ambiguity of definition, to his mind, must "be understood as an offer to Germans in general, and to the indirect participants in particular, to avoid responsibility and enter into an unconfessed, passive complicity that did not weigh on the conscience." Since the "euthanasia" campaign aroused no opposition among the thousands of officials involved, it gave the state leadership "the certainty that systematically planned mass murder, organized according to a division of labor, was essentially possible to achieve with the German government apparatus and the German public."

TO BE SURE, Aly concedes that "the decision on the 'final solution of the Jewish question' was unquestionably interwoven with the anti-Semitic doctrine of the German state at the time." But he insists that "any analysis will miss the mark if it is based only on the explanations offered time and again by Hitler and his Propaganda Minister and if it takes them at face value." Specifically, Aly is adamant that "Nazi ideology gained its effectiveness not from isolated, government-controlled hatred of Jews or the mentally ill, Gypsies or Slavs, but from the totalitarian unity of so-called negative and positive population policies." What Himmler liked to call "the socialism of good blood" really amounted to the racist superstition that the Jews "counted as a world enemy, the so called anti-race per se"; but still Aly insists that "it was not the ideology itself that was historically unique, but the fact that it succeeded within a short time in becoming the central principle of a modern state."

Much of this is accurate. But what it excludes is just as important, historically and morally, as what it includes. For it is a fact that there was opposition in Germany to the killing of "Aryan" inmates of insane asylums, just as there was opposition to the regime's attempt to take out the crosses from classrooms in Bavaria. The government was highly sensitive to public opinion: it stopped the "euthanasia" campaign (even though it continued it secretly elsewhere); it relented from confronting the Catholic population of Bavaria; it worried about rationing luxury items, let alone food, and therefore robbed the occupied countries and doomed them to famine and mass death; it employed millions of slave workers so as to lighten the load for the Germans. Even bureaucrats, as Aly himself shows, were anything but passive puppets of their seniors. They actively participated in formulating policy. Their opinion mattered.

But there was one issue, and only one issue, on which there seemed to be a general consensus and absolutely no debate: the persecution, the exclusion, the isolation, the expropriation, and finally the murder of the Jews. Some voices were raised about the utility of their labor potential, but those voices were weak and unimportant. Bishop Clemens August Graf von Galen of Münster, who protested so eloquently about the murder of the mentally ill, uttered not a single public word about the murder of the Jews.

HOW THIS CONSENSUS was created, and what its effects on the formulation and the implementation of policy were, is not a marginal issue in trying to understand the mechanism whereby a state carries out a genocide. It is possible that, as Aly writes, "Hitler's role ... cannot be described as that of an inexorable giver of orders, but as that of a politician who gave his people free rein, encouraged them to develop the imagination to make the apparently impossible possible, and backed them unconditionally." Yet the controlling fantasy of Hitler's existence was the eradication of the Jews, and it was this fantasy, and the imagination of a total extermination, that he provoked in the public and encouraged his functionaries to realize.

There are many letters from German soldiers on the Eastern front that approvingly cite Hitler's speech in which he promised to exterminate European Jewry if "they" unleashed another world war; and these letters are just one measure of the extent to which the Führer's genocidal fantasies came to be shared by millions of Germans. Indeed, Aly himself asks whether "the machinery of extermination would not have been stopped, or at least slowed, had serious opposition and difficulties in legitimation arisen in the initial weeks and months. And this," he rightly notes, "leads to questions about the behaviour of the Germans, in particular." But he himself relents from pursuing this troublesome avenue of inquiry any further. "These questions are not the subject of this book," he lamely explains, "but must be posed in the same measure that we take leave of the exculpatory idea of a 'Führer order.'"

The young German scholar Christian Gerlach has recently put forward a new

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interpretation of the Wannsee conference. According to Gerlach, the original purpose of the meeting was to debate the status of German Jewish *Mischlinge*, or "half-breeds," individuals with both "Aryan" and Jewish ancestry. But following the Soviet counter-offensive before Moscow on December 5, 1941 and the Japanese attack in Pearl Harbor two days later, Hitler apparently decided to extend the mass killing of the Jews that was already taking place in the occupied parts of the Soviet Union into a continent-wide and perhaps universal "final solution of the Jewish question." This, argues Gerlach, was related to Hitler's above-mentioned speech of January 30, 1939, in which he warned that in the case of a world war he would murder all the Jews of Europe. Hitler repeatedly referred to this speech in later years (though he tended to post-date it to the outbreak of war in September 1939). According to Gerlach, it was only in December 1941 that Hitler came to think of the war as a world war, and consequently ordered the genocide of the Jews.

THUS GERLACH MAKES a clear distinction between the mass shootings of Soviet Jews in the summer of 1941, where the victims were murdered wherever they were found, and the "Final Solution," in which Jews were brought over thousands of miles to previously built death camps and killed there with ever greater speed and efficiency. He, too, has found no "Hitler order," and yet he makes a powerful argument in favor of Hitler's centrality in the making of the decision to exterminate totally; and thereby he undermines not only the older functionalist interpretations but also Aly's notion of a more or less smooth transition from "ethnic policies" to genocide, and Hitler's relative marginality to this process.

On February 24, 1942, Hitler proclaimed in a speech to the members of the Nazi Party: "Today ... my prophecy shall hold true that it is not the Aryan race that will be destroyed in this war, but rather it is the Jew who will be exterminated. Whatever comes with the struggle, however long it will last, this shall be its final outcome. And only then, after the elimination of these parasites, will a long period of international understanding and thus true peace spread over the suffering world." Such statements were greeted in Germany not with equanimity, but with enthusiasm. There were those who disliked them; but they remained silent about them, and thus complicit with them.

If we are to understand the origins of the Holocaust, we must understand the origins of this public attitude in Germany. For it was a combination of technocratic activism and public complicity that made the great crime possible, and the former would not have accomplished much without the latter. And if we are to understand the nature of the killing, we must go beyond the neat desks of the *Schreibtischtäter* and observe the physical encounter between the perpetrators and their victims. This must be seen from the perspective of the victims, and this perspective, contrary to Aly's assertion, has received very little scholarly attention, especially in Germany.

By including the voices of those who were subjected to persecution, humiliation, torture, and murder, we may realize the extent to which hatred and ideological conviction were at the root of the events and were constantly fueled by the very encounter that they originated. From where the victims stood, there was no doubt in their minds that they were not being killed as bureaucratic abstractions, but as the worst enemies of the Germans and as the lowliest creatures on earth: as Jews. ■

CORRESPONDENCE

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schema? The majority of Indian voters, as well as "coloureds" living outside the Western Cape, voted for the D.P.

Second, the strident anti-apartheid voice of South Africa's white liberals during the worst years of oppression complicates the picture. The liberalism and liberals of this era were not irrelevant to South Africa's post-apartheid future. To the contrary, they have proved central to it.

Nearly ten years after Mandela's release from jail, politics have shifted fundamentally here. The new debate in South Africa is about how to reach the goal—held commonly by the ruling party and by the official opposition—of a nonracist, prosperous future. It is about small government versus state patronage; centralization versus devolution of power; free markets versus state intervention; and genuine empowerment of the (mostly black) poor, the marginalized, and the unemployed versus the enrichment of a new elite in the name of black empowerment, which many in my country characterize as a form of crony capitalism.

The demise of Afrikaaner nationalism explains the recent flood of white voters in the D.P. But it is the voters that have shifted, not the party. The D.P.'s election manifesto planted the flag of liberal democratic values—aimed at transforming South Africa into an "opportunity society"—and invited all who identified with this program to gather round it. There is not one shred of evidence to prove that the D.P. panders to white racists or to "white fears" of losing apartheid privileges.

Beinart quotes the words of one D.P. defector to the African National Congress (ANC) to justify the parody he presents of my party. I can ask only this: Would U.S. Senators Phil Gramm and Ben Nighthorse Campbell—both, in their time, high-profile defectors from the U.S. Democratic Party—be the most objective witnesses of their former home?

The ANC is on the defensive. If President Thabo Mbeki fails to deliver significant socioeconomic change within the next five years, then the D.P. will win even bigger in the next election. Isn't that how democracies work?

TONY LEON
Leader of the Democratic Party
Johannesburg, South Africa

PETER BEINART REPLIES:
"Black" versus "African" is a semantic game. Yes, the D.P. did well in South Africa's small Indian community, and won some "coloured" votes (although it is misleading to brag about winning a "coloured" majority outside the Western Cape, since the Western Cape is where most "coloureds" live). But these smaller communities do not change the basic picture. The vast majority of the ANC's voters are "African" (or whatever term you prefer), and very few Africans voted for the D.P. The vast majority of D.P. voters are white, and very few whites voted for the ANC. As for "the strident anti-apartheid voice of South Africa's white liberals during the worst years of oppression," Leon knows that many South African liberals—including Alan Paton's Liberal Party itself—did not support universal suffrage. And the views of Dr. Bukelwa Mbulawa, the former D.P. member of parliament who called the party "custodians of popular right-wing politics," are not just the result of personal animus; they reflect black public opinion. A recent poll in the Johannesburg *Mail & Guardian* showed Leon to be the second-least-popular politician among blacks, second only to quasi-fascist Constand Viljoen. Leon says there is no evidence that the D.P. panders to white nostalgia for racial privileges, but what about the D.P. ads promising to "restore merit, justice, and honesty"? To what halcyon days do they refer? ■

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Rip-off 2000

AT BERKELEY IN THE 1960s my friends and I used to dream about blowing up utility towers and taking down telephone relays. Our problem wasn't that AT&T and Pacific Gas and Electric were *capitalist* institutions, but that they were arrogant monopolies unresponsive to consumers. I have similar feelings today about Microsoft and America Online, the two behemoths of the computer industry. (Don't worry, though, I'm no more likely to act rashly now than I was when I was younger.)

I'M NOT A COMPUTER NOVICE; I GOT my first PC in 1984. But, for the past three years—not coincidentally, around the time Microsoft set out to crush Netscape—I have had nothing but grief from Bill Gates's vaunted products. My first mistake was naïvely assuming that "upgrading" was synonymous with "improving." When I upgraded from Windows 95 to Windows 98, both my tape drive and my fax board stopped working. When I upgraded from Word 6.0 to Word 97, which was part of the Office 97 package, I began losing my work in mysterious shadow files. When I opened a file, the program would create and open a duplicate of it in an adjoining window, but when I tried to write in this file, the entire program would crash.

I BOUGHT A COPY OF OFFICE 2000 ON the very first day Microsoft made it available for sale. I had to get rid of the shadow files, and I did. But the new Word 2000 would unexpectedly crash when I tried to save my work. I'd get the ominous message, "WINWORD caused an invalid page fault in module KERNEL32.DLL." Of course, after each of these calamities, I called Microsoft's technical-support line, and each time a "technician" told me he had never before heard of my problem (implying that I must have screwed something up) and then spent half an hour, at my expense, failing to solve it. I finally fixed the Word 2000 problem myself—but more or less by accident. After I stopped using Microsoft's Internet Explorer 5.0, which comes integrated with Windows 98 and Office 2000, and began using lowly Netscape 4.6, my Word software suddenly stopped misbehaving.

IS THERE AN IRONY HERE? THE HEART of Microsoft's reply to the government's antitrust suit has been that consumers benefit from having integrated programs. "As a general matter," Microsoft's summation asserts, "it is common sense that things work better if they are designed and built as a unit." My particular experience suggests otherwise, but I also think the general principle is wrong. Just as a modular stereo system is preferable to a totally integrated one, modular software is also better. The more integrated a system is, the more difficult it is to design and the more likely it is to be plagued by bugs, one of which may ultimately infect the whole.

I AM NOT AN EXPERT IN ANTITRUST law, and I'm not sure drastic remedies are justified on the merits of the actual case, but I wouldn't mind seeing Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson break Microsoft into two independent companies, one for producing operating systems and the other for designing applications such as word-processing software. Let Microsoft dominate the operating system business if it can—it's probably better to have a standard operating system for all PCs—but let many companies vie to create the best word processor, spreadsheet, or Web browser. That's the way it used to be, and few experienced users would deny that, for the most basic purposes, the old DOS word processors, XyWrite and WordPerfect, were better than their Windows descendants.

AOL IS NOT YET A MONOPOLY, BUT I shudder to think what the computer world would be like if it were. The promise of privately subscribed networks like The Source and, later, of the Internet and World Wide Web was that they were an interactive medium that could foster new electronic communities. AOL is to the Internet what disco is to music; it specializes in chat rooms, popular among teenagers, and customized information designed to encourage online shopping, from which it makes a profit. Its e-mail program compares unfavorably with programs you can get for free off the Internet, and if you are unlucky, like me, you'll find your mailbox stuffed with invitations to discover "Ho's, Sluts, Virgins, Videos, You Name It."

USING THE OLD NETWORKS, THE Source and Compuserve, you could take part in discussions about the best and worst hardware and software. If you wanted to buy a modem, you could consult the modem forum and find out what savvier folks recommended. If you had problems with your video card or hard drive, you could get better advice on the forums than from the companies' technical-support lines. If the companies refused to recognize problems with their products, you could alert other consumers. The companies, which monitored these forums, would usually respond, and their best technical people would often enter into discussions with the people in the forums.

AOL ONCE HAD THESE KINDS OF forums, too—though never to the extent that The Source and Compuserve did—but they have either been discontinued or have fallen into disuse. Now, if you want to learn about hardware or software, AOL directs you to a "forum" run by CNET, which features advertisements by the same companies whose products it reviews and which will sell you the reviewed products—either directly through the company or through a store on the Internet. Under a Compaq ad, one learns from CNET that the Compaq Presario 5714 is a "home PC ... stuffed with good stuff." After reading such a description, who could resist clicking "buy it now!"?

AOL ALSO USED TO HAVE FORUMS where collectors could discuss, trade, and sell their favorite collectibles, from jewelry to rare coins. These forums were preferable to Web auctions because, over the months, you learned whom you were dealing with and whom you could trust. I used to participate regularly in AOL's fountain-pen forum. But then AOL decided that it could make more money by forcing anyone who wanted to sell a collectible to do so through a paid classified ad. So much for the pen forum. When I complained and suggested that the forum members protest, I got a message from AOL threatening me with a "TOS"—termination of service.

I WANT RALPH NADER TO DO SOMEthing about Microsoft and AOL, but I can never get him on the phone. He always calls me back when I'm out or on the phone myself, and he never leaves his number. So, Ralph, here's my plan. You should set up an electronic, interactive Web page devoted to consumer discussion of different products. It could even be distributed by subscription. One part of it could be devoted to computer software and hardware, and it could be monitored by staff members who would summarize discussions and make sure that the companies knew what we consumers were saying about their products. If I wanted to complain about the bugs in Word 2000 or the totalitarian policies of AOL, I'd have someplace to go. I wouldn't have to write columns like this one.

JOHN B. JUDIS

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Take History to Heart

EXPLORE LIFE, LOSS, AND SURVIVAL DURING THE HOLOCAUST

10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily. ADMISSION FREE. Same-day passes for the main exhibition, *The Holocaust*, can be easily obtained at the Museum or in advance by calling ProTix (800) 400-9373. No passes necessary for Museum entrance, special exhibitions, and other resources. Special exhibitions include *Remember the Children, Daniel's Story* and opening November 14, 1999, *Life Reborn: Jewish Displaced Persons, 1945–1951.*

UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM

100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW Washington, D.C. 20024 (202) 488-0400 www.ushmm.org metro: Smithsonian

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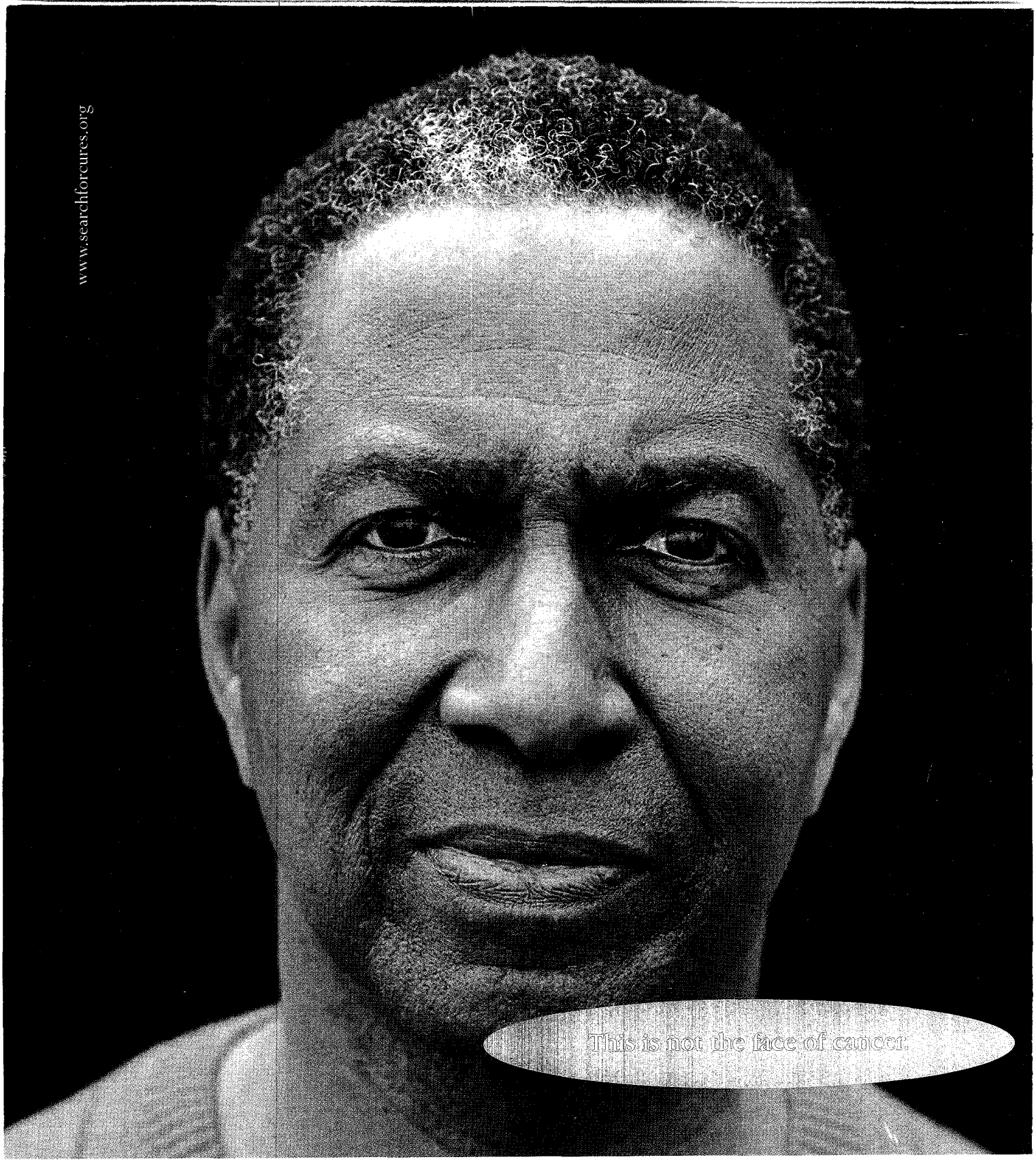

It's the face of Jim Williams. A father and a pilot, he has been in remission from prostate cancer for over eight years. As someone who did two combat tours in Vietnam, he knows war. Still, he considers prostate cancer his ultimate battle. Jim relies on new medicines from America's pharmaceutical companies. They're a major reason why he's in remission. Even though more people are surviving prostate cancer than ever before, pharmaceutical company researchers won't give up until there is a cure. Their relentless search allows people like Jim to face a future filled with hope.

America's Pharmaceutical Companies

Leading the way in the search for cures

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